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OAKFIELD;

OR,

FELLOWSHIP IN THE EAST.

BY

W. D. ARNOLD,
LIEUT. FIFTY-EIGHTH REGIMENT B. N. I.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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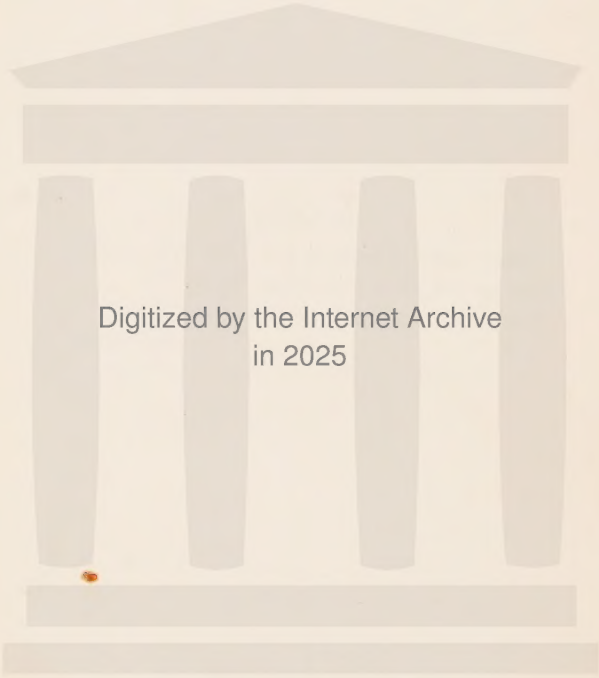
" . . . He within,
" Took measure of his soul, and knew its strength,
" And by that silent knowledge, day by day
" Was calmed, ennobled, comforted, sustained."

MYCERINUS.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OAKFIELD,

OR

FELLOWSHIP IN THE EAST.

CHAPTER I.

"Then be my restless heart content,
Dull years are not all idly spent:
Give me one feeling true and deep,
One hour of self-forsaking;
And I will bear with years of sleep
For that one glimpse of waking."

ANONYMOUS.

WE left Oakfield at Ferozepore, waiting in that hot July weather for the sentence of the court martial; which sentence (it may be as well to say) is agreed upon in a cleared court, by the members, under an oath of secrecy, both as to their own and their neighbours' votes; as also the finding of guilty or not guilty is first voted upon individually, going upwards from the junior member; and afterwards the sentence is decided upon in a similar manner; the proceedings are then closed, and sent up to

head quarters for the approval, confirmation, or revision of the Commander-in-chief, and finally appear in printed general orders; so that the sentence of a court martial assembled at a station some thousand miles from the head quarters, especially if the proceedings are sent back once or twice for reconsideration or alteration, is sometimes not known for two or even three months from the time of the trial. Oakfield, however, had not much more than three weeks to wait. About the end of August it was known in Ferozepore that general orders had come, by the morning post, containing the two courts martial. Stafford was found guilty of sending a challenge to fight a duel, and sentenced to be degraded three steps in the list of Lieutenants of his regiment. Then followed,—"At the same court, on the 2nd August, 1847, Ensign E. Oakfield, of the 90th regiment of Native Light Infantry, was arraigned on the following charges:

1. "For conduct highly unbecoming an officer and a gentleman, in suffering himself on the 20th of June, 1847, to be grossly and publicly insulted at the mess-table of his regiment, and neither reporting to his commanding officer, nor in any way noticing the affront."

2. "For highly unofficer-like conduct, in having, on the morning of the 21st of June, 1847,

assaulted Lieutenant H. Straddles, of the 90th regiment, N. I., and struck him repeatedly with a riding whip."

Finding — "The court having carefully weighed and considered the evidence that has been brought before them, as well as what the prisoner has said in his defence, are of opinion that he, Ensign E. Oakfield, of the 90th regiment of Native Light Infantry, is,

"On the first charge, Not guilty; and they do acquit him thereof.

"On the second charge Guilty."

Sentence: "The court having found the prisoner guilty to the extent above specified, do now sentence him to be severely reprimanded, in such a place and manner as his Excellency the Commander be now pleased to direct."

Recommendation by the court: "The court beg most respectfully to urge, in mitigation of the punishment due to the offence of which the prisoner has been most clearly convicted, and for which he has been sentenced by them according to the Article of war, the very great provocation under which it was committed."

"Approved and confirmed."

Remarks by his Excellency the Commander-in-chief: — "The Commander-in-chief, taking into consideration the recommendation of the court, and

the extreme and gross provocation by which Ensign Oakfield was tempted to commit the unmilitary action of which he has been very properly convicted, merely desires that Ensign Oakfield will recollect for the future that personal violence is a mode of redress which neither civil or military law can for a moment tolerate. On the first charge the court has acquitted the prisoner, and therefore the Commander-in-chief abstains from commenting upon his conduct; but he cannot refrain from expressing his strong disapprobation of the behaviour of Captain Colt; and indeed, were it not for that officer's previous services in the field, the Commander-in-chief would have felt himself compelled to order him to be tried by court martial for egregious neglect of duty. Ensign Oakfield will be released from arrest, and return to his duty."

So ended the Ferozepore court martial; and the 90th were indignant. Stafford put down three steps (by which proceeding both Straddles and Brooks were gainers, by the bye, so that they felt bound to express an extra amount of indignation to prove their disinterestedness), while Oakfield got off with a reprimand! Colonel Pringle talked seriously of leaving the army, if such things were to be done and tolerated in it; but he did *not* retire, and stops promotion even to this day. Even

those most kindly inclined to Oakfield, such as Perkins, now that he had got off so lightly, and was as it were up again, felt less indisposed to condemn him; whatever sneaking sympathy there might have been for him at the time of the trial, was quite gone, or boldly transferred to Stafford, who, for his part, was comically divided between an affectation of regarding himself as a martyr to the cause of honour, and a great heartiness of damning Straddles for having got him into such a scrape, by which Straddles himself (the unkindest cut of all) came out a gainer. His friends, however, were staunch,—Mr. Middleton, Stanton, and Wykham, that is to say; for from his friends at home he resolved, now that the matter had so ended, to conceal the event altogether. Mrs. Oakfield suspected something, from a certain forced air and unusual vacancy in his letters, the sure consequence of a man's suppressing what his mind is full of, and writing upon other points which, for the time at least, he cannot feel much real interest in; but she would not ask what he apparently wished to conceal, and never knew what had happened till she heard it from Wykham, more than a year afterwards. She now, however, began to hear from Oakfield himself what distressed her more than the account of his court martial troubles would have done,—that his health was failing;

that his old delicacy of the lungs seemed to be allying itself with new symptons of liver ailment, —a combination so often fatal to the Anglo-Indian. Not that Oakfield either talked, or the least thought, of fatal symptoms; he was ill indeed, but not seriously; only the depression, which so often accompanies any affection of the liver, made him more sensible than he otherwise would have been to the unkindness of those about him. He never for an instant thought of retracting or qualifying his principles; he was only half-ashamed of himself for so much regarding what he knew to be of so little importance. "But I fear," he said one day to Mr. Middleton, "that I am not cut out for a combatant; old Stanton now, were he in my position, with double my firmness, would evince a complete and unruffled composure, which would make even his opponents half laugh at their inability to disturb him."

"I don't think you have much to reproach yourself with on either head," said Mr. Middleton, knowing that Oakfield's language was that of sincere self-reproach, and that his answer was not, therefore, flattery, but a just consolation. "I am sure you show no signs of being over-troubled by anything, except by sickness, which you must get rid of; and I am equally sure that neither Stanton nor any of us could have fought the battle with more firmness and temper than you did."

"And yet," he said, "you will not suspect me of hunting for praise, when I say that I sometimes doubt whether I did not rather evade the true point at issue in raising that defence about Colt. I have no compassionate regrets for having lugged him into a scrape which he well deserved; but I am not sure that it would not have been a fairer answer, a more honest, unflinching testimony, to have taken my stand simply on an unqualified denial of the unholy command, 'Thou shalt resent evil.' Really, the almost literal opposition of the Articles of war to the New Testament on this point is quite startling."

"The *literal* opposition, Oakfield; but you ought to be the last man in the world to allow yourself to be imposed upon by a mere literal coincidence. No--I am sure that you took the right ground. That 'an officer shall resent an affront,' is not really inconsistent with the high moral precept, 'when a man smites thee on the one cheek, turn to him the other also;'—depend upon it, it was a true instinctive consciousness of this that induced you to appeal to Colt, and afterwards to rest your defence upon that appeal."

"You mean," rejoined Oakfield, "that society is obliged to take, and therefore is justified in taking, a lower standard of morality than an individual."

"Even that I think is true, though you put it harshly. Society may rightly hang a man for murder, and that not for example, but for retribution. Why, then, may not one man slay a murderer in the same righteous spirit? I will not, indeed, say that he may not; I do not think it impossible that a good man, seeing one commit a hideous crime, may not even kill him in the holiness of his wrath, and stand excused to his own conscience and to God himself. But I am sure that it would be madness for society to allow such a possibility; because, for one case where such homicide would be as just and dispassionate a retribution as a legal execution, there would be a million and more where it would be only an evil and malignant murder. Society cannot tell, cannot judge, and therefore cannot allow for motives. It can only prevent and punish consequences. In this way you must think of the unlimited evil consequences of allowing swaggering bullies to hector away unchecked. Far more, certainly, than in the case I supposed, a good man *may* bear it, endure it, and in the strong consciousness of rectitude be meekly silent; and yet society, military society especially, is not wrong, I think, in enjoining the resenting of affronts as a law; because, while it cannot detect the exceptional cases where submission is the result of strong self-government and

high religious principle, it does know the strong torrent of bravado, tyranny, and insolence on the one hand, cringing baseness and cowardice on the other, which would pour down were the safeguard of this (frail I grant, and in principle defective, yet necessary) law, withdrawn."

"I never heard you hold forth so vehemently before," said Oakfield, half admiringly, "except once."

Mr. Middleton laughed.

"Ah! you have not forgotten my Ganges sermon, but I have not done yet: it is true I am silent till I speak, and when I speak I fear I sometimes preach, and when I preach it may be that I prose, but that you must endure; however, to continue,—what is true, I think, of society altogether, that it is forced (not to take a lower standard of right and wrong but) to guard right and wrong, by laws lower in principle, and springing from a lower and less worthy ground than those which originate in the high and only entirely true legislative court of conscience, is true also of military, as compared with common, society. If the fountain of ordinary social law be necessarily low, that of military law is still lower. For armies themselves being anomalies, the necessary but still anomalous consequences of the world's having once degenerated from the high moral ground

where alone the motive can be decided upon as colouring the act, it must needs follow that its laws should also be anomalous. As a mere arrangement for preserving the peace, nay, as a needful help to keeping up the artificial character which is considered (rightly or wrongly,—Oliver Cromwell, you know, thought wrongly, and created a regiment of ironsides, on strange revolutionary principles, by discarding the artificial in favour of the real sincere character), but which I say is still considered, best for keeping up the fighting qualities in soldiers, military law has, I think, a right to prescribe a certain code of manners, even as they, and as colleges, and other peculiar institutions do a certain code of dress and habits, and even diet."

"But," suggested Oakfield, "surely a compulsory code of manners is a far greater infringement upon personal liberty than a code of dress or habits."

"Granted; but the excess of interference is not greater than the greater peculiarity of the military institution warrants."

"You cannot mean that a man is bound to submit to a code of manners which his own code of morals rejects."

"Of course not; but he should consider well whether he need reject it. Of course all this would be the vilest casuistry if I were attempting

to set up any authority above a man's own conscience, which is, after all, the one final court of appeal, by whose sentence every decision of all minor jurisdictions must be confirmed, or utterly quashed; I only mean that there are things which, for social convenience sake, we may lawfully submit to a lower tribunal; even as you did when you brought Stafford's conduct to the notice of a superior officer, as we all do whenever we go to law; for this is the only answer I can find, and I think it is a conclusive answer to the quaker doctrine of entire non-resistance; but when that lower tribunal requires of you some act, such as fighting a duel, or any much more trifling action, which represents itself to you as malignant, and therefore wrong, then, of course, you must go no further; you must say no,—the case is no longer before you; to the utmost of your jurisdiction I have obeyed, but now I am engaged with laws which you do not administer. In the same way, that in the case I just supposed, of a man's literally going to law, there may arise, at any time, circumstances which transfer his case from the sessions to the assizes, so it may at any time be his duty to transfer it himself from any human court to the higher jurisdiction of God and conscience; and if he still continues to prosecute his cause notwithstanding, in a court of human law,

he is guilty of sin just as much as a man who, in obedience to the lower law of honour, fights a duel in opposition to the double command of two higher authorities—social and moral law."

"I follow you;" said Oakfield, "it is very good of you to find a theory to suit my practice, though it is rather putting the cart before the horse."

"No, I do not think it is, I am rather fond of theorising myself, and reducing things to laws and principles, but I do not at all admit that a cut and dried theory is the horse which must, in every case, precede the cart of action. Our actions would be few, and poor, and hesitating, did we always wait to find a theory to fit them to."

"How should a man act then if not on principle? What security have you then for the actions?"

"On principle he must act; that is, he must have broad principles of right and wrong clearly established in his own mind; a theoriser, in the bad sense of the word, is one who is always fidgeting to find out how his principle applies, and to what principle his act is to be referred, and so on, while a more healthy-minded man feels that he acts most truly when he acts on impulse; a good man may feel sure that his impulsive act, besides having a freshness and a vigour which no careful laborious squaring to a given principle beforehand

can ever give, will also be far more correct; he may examine afterwards, and then find, with pleasure, that he can refer it, with great precision, to a theory. You will never fail to find a good theory to support a good practice, but reverse this order and you will seldom be able to deduce a good practice from however good a theory."

This conversation took place during a morning ride; Oakfield had met Mr. Middleton, who had been out alone inspecting the new gaol which he was building; they had by this time reached the house, and found Miss Middleton, according to custom, seated in the verandah, with the tea-pot and the mangoes on the little table, waiting for her brother. They both dismounted. "Give me a cup of tea, directly, Fan; I have been preaching."

Miss Middleton looked at Oakfield as for confirmation of this remark; she knew how rare her brother's outpourings were.

"Yes, I assure you," Oakfield said, in answer to her look, "he has been talking more freely than I have heard him do for a year past."

"I consider myself defrauded, Henry; you had no business to be loquacious without me. Now the fit is over, and I suppose you will give me the benefit of your silence for another twelve months."

Oakfield remained to spend the day, as he now

did many days; for he had little inducement to stay in cantonments, and his still failing health prevented those habits of regular employment and active thought which could alone have made complete solitude endurable. Towards the end of August, however, he was so unwell that the doctor would not permit him to stand the trying month of September in the plains, and sent him to the hills, on medical certificate, till the 1st of January. He was, for some reasons, glad; for others, unwilling to go. He was glad to be relieved from his present unpleasant position, and yet would have dreaded any appearance of timidly retreating from it. He would be glad to see Wykham at Simla; but he had to part with the Middletons. He believed that his health required the change, and yet it was very trying to be going away on leave of absence, especially to one in his peculiar circumstances, just as there seemed a prospect of the regiment's being ordered on service. The disturbances which in April had seemed a mere local agitation at Mooltan, but had become serious there by the murder of two British officers; had, by procrastination and feeble tossing to and fro of responsibility, been fomented into something very like a general insurrection in the Punjab. Already a large force was in progress to Mooltan; already there was a rumour afloat, that an army was to be

formed on the frontier, under the Commander-in-chief, and that there would be another Sikh campaign. However, Oakfield knew that he could at any time rejoin his corps, should it actually go on service, and that in the meantime two months or even one month in the hills would probably be of great use to him, setting him up for the whole cold season. Accordingly, on the 3rd of September, he started for Simla. He had a troublesome journey, for the floods were out, and there are few things in this world more entirely irksome and disagreeable than travelling in a palanquin through a flooded country. The patient (such he surely is whether invalid or not) is jolted along dismally; the perpetual complaints of the bearers mingling with the sound of the dripping rain and the moaning wind; the torch is blown out every three minutes, and so often has he to stop while it is relighted; his palki is not altogether water-tight; first he feels a suspicious drop on his up-looking face, wipes it away, but lo, another and another, and the gloomy truth is too manifest that there is a leak over head, and ere long he finds his only comfort in resignation, and after vainly trying to protect first one part, then another, from the encroaching moisture, at last fairly gives in, and is soon lying in a cold trickling river; even this becomes bearable, by use, and as he is getting

accustomed to it, perhaps even thinks of sleeping, notwithstanding the discordant sounds without and the watery couch within, he hears an extra yelling, feels a strange uplifting, has a painful consciousness that he is about to be let down, when he finds himself, palki and all, deposited upon the bearers' heads, and so passing through a broad rapid nullah, up to a man's chest in depth. In the middle of the stream, as he looks out upon the thick yellow rushing water, just where it gleams sullenly in the light of the torch, a man slips; the rest yell; the palki lurches; and his heart is in his mouth; for immersion in that boxed up conveyance is certain drowning. The bearers, however, recover themselves, and presently the same screeching which had attended his being hoisted up proclaims that he is being let down, and again he jogs on, on his moist, monotonous, melancholy march. The long night passes away in occasional nullah passages and alternating glimpses of rest; the day breaks, and is gladly welcomed; but too soon the sun arises, shining with a pale sickly heat over the flooded plains, which begin visibly to exhale their feverish steam; the wet palki and its wet inmate are soon dried up, and then the sun begins to beat down with a sickening power. Seven o'clock! The bearers quicken their pace into a fast measured shuffle;

their noisy talk degenerates into a methodical sing-song that keeps time with their step; and by these signs the unhappy traveller knows that his rest is near. A group of trees is seen, and amongst them the small white bungalow. Happy that one moment of leaping satisfaction, after the long hours of discomfort. The palki is set down, its pale dishevelled inmate hoists himself out with his sun-baked shrivelled garments hanging to him in uncomfortable wrinkles, and finds that he has with thus much pain and grief, accomplished thirty miles of the two hundred and fifty which constitute his journey. However, hope gilds the future, and the elastic youth, forgetful of the immediate past, sets himself to find what comfort he can in the busy present—scanty, it must be owned; rest and shelter he may find, but assuredly not comfort. Dâk bungalows have been described by some Oriental travellers as "the Inns of India." Playful satirists! Who does not associate the word inn with his most cheerful hours, with evenings of intensest comfort, with meals of rarest conviviality? What English imagination does not, at the word inn, see visions of blazing fires, bright red curtains, dark mahogany tables, panelled wainscots, hospitable landladies, obliging waiters, amiable chambermaids, virtuous soles, tender beef-steaks, refreshing malt, deep-curtained beds, snow

white sheets, downy pillows, comfort on every side, cleanliness in every department, a pleasant evening over the paper, a good night's rest in a good four-poster, a cheerful waking the next morning at the friendly voice of Boots, to proceed by the mail, which is even now putting to in the yard, or to go down by the omnibus to the station for the early train! And these things are to be transferred to a dâk bungalow in India!! Passing over those differences which a different country and climate necessitate, such as the absence of fires and the substitution of native for European attendants, we still find little to justify the comparison. What did Oakfield see as he emerged from his palki? A cold white bungalow, with all doors open, disclosing the two rooms which compose the house. He may occupy either of these rooms he likes; nor need the privilege perplex him, for they are each the fac-simile of the other. He enters either, and finds four white walls, a very ricketty, dirty, roughly-made table, two chairs to match, and in one corner a small square bedstead, dirty to a degree that makes even the table and chairs look clean; the pillows and bedding in his palki are soaked through with the last night's rain, so he must resign his body, taking the precaution to keep his clothes on, to the dingy pallet, and rest his aching head upon his

coat. The obsequious waiter (shade of "Charles!") comes in—the one long-robed, long-bearded, dark-visaged, beturbaned attendant—and asks if breakfast shall be brought.

Of course it shall. These eighteen hours the man is fasting from all but muddy water. But no vain dialogue succeeds about what shall be provided; too well the unhappy traveller knows the nakedness of the land, and with a sigh of resignation, and one pitying glance towards the brood which he sees and hears frolicking in the compound*, orders the grilled fowl. The native attendant, as though agreeably surprised at receiving such an order, and proud of his ability to obey it, rushes out, and in a moment is seen enticing one out of that destined tribe. A shout, a cackle, a struggle, a triumphant exclamation, and the traveller has the satisfaction of knowing that his breakfast is secured. In the course of an hour it appears: the intermediate time has been profitably employed in doing battle with the countless flies, which descend upon this favoured spot in myriads that forcibly recal the days of Pharaoh and afflicted Egypt. But the breakfast is come: two square feet of the unhappy table are covered with a dirty brown towel, which is "the govern-

* *Compound*—the small paddock-like enclosure in which a house is situated.

ment regulation tablecloth;" and on this is the appetising meal. There lies, in all its leathery indigestible integrity, the deluded cock, that father of whole generations of dâk bungalow supplies, who only this morning, with unfearing crow, heralded in the day of his doom; a browner, more leathery substance, called a chapattie, supplies the place of bread; and in that vessel of undefinable metal floats a hot preparation of some unpronounceable leaf, which the caterer, in the same incorrigible spirit of stern humour, presents as tea. The breakfast is taken away, and now for "a day at an inn." The healthy man, with organs underanged, may sleep; the contemplative man may speculate upon the march of civilisation in India as indicated by dâk bungalows, which, from the day of their institution, twelve years ago, until now, have remained, with no fear of innovating reform, with little or no change save that the furniture (the table, two chairs, and dirty bedstead aforesaid) were then only old, but now are crumbling to their last decay; the morbid man may marvel under what foolish star he was born, that he worried his friends out of their lives to procure him an appointment in the gorgeous East; the inquisitive man may read over, in the bungalow-book, the names of all the victims that have been there; the poet may add

his mite to the stores of facetious and sentimental literature with which the Snooks and the Browns of this world have garnished this said book; but the sick man — what shall he do, except vainly wish it was evening, that he might be in his palki, and again struggling with the waters, and again wishing it were morning!

Such was Oakfield's journey in the pleasant month of September: it will hardly be wondered at, that when he reached Simla, and found himself at last landed in Wykham's rooms at the Pavilion, he was seriously unwell. He had, however, not been so ill but that he had been impressed with his first view of the Himalayas; striking it always must be — the thought that those great ranges which we see with our eyes are the very Himalaya mountains of which we were taught in our geography lessons as children, which have ever existed for us as a vague standard of immeasurable size. But as the traveller approaches for the first time that wonderful nucleus of the earth's anatomy, he requires no such strange reminiscences to stir his wonder: that first glance is one

> "That hath no need of a remoter charm,
> By thought supplied, or any interest
> Unborrowed from the eye:"

the dark huge mass giving to the mind an almost new idea of the meaning of size: those endless

ranges that rise up one behind another, growing dimmer and more dim in the vague distance, till suddenly up spring, hindmost of all, far the most distant of all, yet looking so near and distinct as to startle the eye that has been with difficulty tracing up the intermediate steps, those white and glistening peaks, which, with that tremendous outline traced in dazzling and perennial snow, seem indeed fit emblems of eternity, and defy the wondering mind to picture to itself a time when aught was and they were not. All day long Oakfield looked and marvelled as he approached the foot of the hills. It was one of those bright days after violent rain, when September feels almost as cold as January, and the sun *seems* at least to be powerless. All day long he travelled—so cool was it, and all day long he gazed, and was not weary; and when he got to his resting-place that night, immediately at the foot of the hills, he was glad to go to bed and rest, for he felt, as it were, overwhelmed, as a man who had stood all the day in a most awful presence. At daybreak he started on a hired pony to ride up the hill. And now it must be confessed that his disappointment began. He looked for the characteristics of mountain scenery, and he found few or none. This is a disappointment which is felt by every one entering the Himalayas who has ever seen the Alps, or the

Highlands, or the Welsh or English Lakes. The mountains partook too much of the nature of the plains of India; the gigantic scale of everything did not at all compensate for that exquisite beauty of detail which Oakfield remembered in Cumberland. The crumbling muddy rock was a poor substitute for the hard slate or granite; the wood lost much of its attraction by its appearance of jungley impenetrability; the monotonous outline defied any attempt at that individualising personification which gave such a vitality to his recollection of every point and crag of his own mountains; and the one crowning defect of all, a defect so great that no beauty could have quite atoned for it, was the entire absence of water. Even in September, when the quantity of water was nearly at its maximum, it could be heard only, and not seen. There was an indistinct murmur in the ravine, and this was well, and he was less disappointed than he would have been by the dead dry silence which reigns for so great a part of the year; but even now, as his eye followed the endless watercourses, it was rarely that he could detect the faintest twinkle of a stream, and this gave an unmeaning look, a listlessness to the whole landscape, which was almost painful. Let those who have been in a mountain country in Europe try to recal some of the scenes which they most admired, and try to conceive what those val-

leys would be if the streams, upon which their existence seems to depend, were wanting. The stream appears to make the valley, and with this natural consequence we are unconsciously pleased; but a valley without a stream is a wax figure — dancing, without music — Hamlet, without the Prince of Denmark.

But Oakfield felt little disposed to quarrel with this or anything else as he gradually mounted into the region of pure and cool atmosphere. He had left the foot of the hills at five o'clock in the morning; at that time the heat was still most oppressive; the night had been one of those hot, close, heavy burdens, so common in September; when he woke the very dawn had no freshness in it; the thick brooding air seemed as though it never could be lightened again. By six o'clock he had ascended two thousand feet, and was, by no other magic than the four legs of a stout hill-pony, transported into a region as different to that he had quitted as Damascus from Bagdad. The pale blue sky was clear and cloudless above him; below lay the plains stretching as far as the horizon, one dank hot fog-bank; the heavy boiling wind was exchanged for light fresh breezes, exhilarating almost to intoxication; the rays of the rising sun were welcomed for their now pleasing warmth; the hills were one mass of fresh moist verdure. The pony trudged on with

the sedate indifference of an animal who was used to the kind of thing ; but Oakfield felt as if he were inhaling laughing gas. He got that night to Hurreepore, and by the help of a horse which Wykham sent down to Sairee to meet him, arrived at Simla in time for breakfast the next morning. Wykham was delighted to see him, and they passed all that day in the pleasing, exciting, yet most transient and unsubstantial conversation which is common to friends who meet after a certain length of absence. In the evening they rode round Jacko, and went to bed soon after dinner, as tired as if the whole day had been passed in violent exertion. Oakfield rose the next morning, feeling better in health and happier in mind than he had done for some weeks past. The first fact is easily accounted for, and may have had some share in producing the second, and yet it was not all. Attached as Oakfield was to the Middletons, he yet felt more at home, more entirely at his ease, more able to bear and to do whatever might be before him, in Wykham's society than theirs. And yet this was strange, for with these he freely discussed all that had happened, while to Wykham he would never perhaps have uttered a syllable had it not been for a circumstance which, after he had been at Simla about a fortnight, drew him into a communication on the subject. He was riding behind

Jacko*, in company with Wykham, according to evening custom, when they met a man riding alone, whom Oakfield instantly recognised as an officer belonging to one of the regiments at Ferozepore, who had been up at Simla ever since the middle of April. Wykham knew him, and spoke to him. Oakfield, as a matter of course, also addressed him, but the other affected not to hear, and passed on. The case was clear: he had heard of what had occurred at Ferozepore, had heard and believed the popular story, and come to the popular conclusion. Oakfield saw all this in an instant, coloured violently, and rode on. Wykham had also seen what had passed, but was not so ready to account for it.

"I say, Oakfield, didn't you speak to that man?"

"Oh, yes," said Oakfield, who had quite recovered his composure.

"Well?"

"Well,—and he cut me Fred, that's all. Nothing when you are used to it, I assure you."

Wykham now understood also, and regret and indignation kept him silent.

"Oakfield," he said, abruptly, "how do you expect all this to end?"

"All what?"

* *Jacko*—the name of a celebrated hill at Simla.

"Oh, you know what I mean; do you intend to be black-balled all your life?"

"Possibly."

"My dear fellow, don't be so confoundedly cool; you can't like it, you know?"

"Not at all, I never said I did; I only say possibly it may be so, whether I like it or not."

"And shall you take no measures to stop it? My dear Ned, patience and endurance may be carried too far."

"No, they cannot, Wykham, not a jot too far, not half far enough. You speak impatiently when you say so; if I was like old Stanton I should tell you that you didn't really think so."

Wykham laughed. "Yes, that is just one of the old bear's cool self-complaisant assertions; but, Oakfield, I really don't know what to think about your principle of endurance. It's all very well in theory, I dare say, but just look at the consequences."

"Well, Fred, even looking at the consequences, though I do not admit that it is at all necessary to do so, I see nothing very terrible in them."

"Not in being cut?"

"No; you do not cut me, nor Stanton, nor Middleton, nor some five or six more I could name; you don't suppose I am afflicted by that fellow who just passed cutting me?"

"Well, I thought you did care when I looked at your face."

"I was foolish to shew it, and you are hard upon me to notice my infirmity. Of course human nature is liable to be irritated by rudeness when it is both intentional and sudden; but if we meet that man to-morrow night you shall see me endure it with a wonderful serenity. Nonsense, Fred! you don't consider it a hardship really. I should like to see you putting yourself out of the way, or doing what you thought wrong, because all the fools of your acquaintance chose to cut you."

Wykham smiled, and there was a force and determination in his smile, as he mentally examined the picture Oakfield exhibited to him, which was strongly in confirmation of the latter's assertion.

"And yet," he said, "I should be inclined, I think, to do something to set myself right."

"Of course, so am I: I have an extra motive, not a very strong one I hope, but still a motive, to live well and shame the devil. Ah! my dear Fred! it does shame me when I think how little we have to bear, and how ill we bear it. For just think," he continued, "how very little we do have to bear, we, in our rank of life; how seldom it is that we are called upon to suffer for conscience sake. It is in this, I think, more even than in physical comforts, that we forget too much the fel-

lowship of the poor with ourselves; expect too much of them, and claim far too great an exemption for ourselves. They are daily tempted by their own agonies, and those of their dearest relations, to the commission of crime, and we wonder that a sense of duty does not restrain them from offences so shocking as theft; but when we are tempted to commit a crime of equal guilt, though the cost of denying ourselves be no more than a displeasure against us, felt by those who have no power at all over us, then we think it a venial weakness if we fall, a miracle of virtue if we stand. I wonder what would become of us if we, with our softened natures, were suddenly exposed to the torrent of temptation that besets the poor. If all that God demands of me is that I shall resist the foolish dictates of a feeble foolish society, I shall not think myself hardly tasked. We live in a soft age, Fred, when everything is made so plain for us, when it is so easy to go through life, assenting, with a shrug and a smile, to a thousand lies in a day; it is well when we get something to harden us, when we wake for a little while to live for ourselves, relinquishing our lazy, faithless dependence upon others."

Wykham looked surprised; he and Oakfield seldom got beyond a playful tone in their conversation; and yet this always left upon them a

sense of agreement and sympathy which made this deeper note, now that it was touched, sound — "not harsh, nor grating," though perhaps at first startling.

"Of course, Oakfield, I don't really expect you to give in to those fellows who differ with you, if you think it necessary to hold out; but do you?"

"Of course I do, and so do you, only you feel a friendly annoyance at seeing me subjected to impertinence, and so half advise me to do what you would justly despise me for if I did really, what you would scorn to do yourself. What do you mean by holding out? or rather, what would it be if I did not hold out? I must go, I suppose, and be guilty of some braggadocia, to prove I am not a coward, or apologise to man for having feared God; — let us hear no more of holding out or giving in."

"You speak pluckily, Ned, and have done pluckily too, and I have a secret satisfaction in your holding out; but do not you think on your own ground, as regards your duty to God and so on (this language was new to Wykham, and he used it rather awkwardly), that holding out may be little better than pride? is it not right to respect, to a certain extent, the opinion of the world? It is all very well to talk of men being fools, but is it not a good deal for a man to assume that he is right and all the world wrong?"

"I didn't expect to hear such a commonplace from you, Fred; it is false though, as every commonplace more or less is. That is a favourite ruse of the devil's, to adopt the parson's language, and call self-reliance pride, and the fear of man humility. There are, of course, cases where a man requires to be cautioned not to set himself up against or above the world; when singularity, especially in indifferent matters, may be pride or vanity; but in morals, for one case where this caution is necessary, there are a thousand where it is worse than superfluous. I know that I do not require it, that my natural tendency is to swim with the stream; and I believe too that you require it a great deal more, that you have naturally far more firmness than I have, and therefore more need to be warned against obstinacy. It's no good grinning, Fred, you know it's true; but besides this, I protest against that claptrap insinuation, that it is a good deal for a man to assume, and so on. I can't help it if it is; a man who is worth his salt must assume a good deal, or the world will drag him down to its own wretched level, while he is playing at mock modesty. The world is enmity with God; that is my ground, as you call it, though your ground too, just as much. Why should I make such a fuss about dissenting from that which is enmity with God? I wish *à priori* to dissent from it."

"You can hardly identify the society in which you and I move with the *world*, which the Bible speaks of in that way."

"Can't I! why not? the identical world; what world do you suppose *is* meant?"

"The world of wicked men."

"And is ours the world of good men? Ah! my dear Wykham, so we go on, passing on the application of the Bible from hand to hand, and all repudiating it, and saying that it is our neighbour's, not ours, till we reduce the Bible to a formal stupid commonplace, and then are satisfied. I say the world does mean my society to me, and the poor man's society to the poor man. If I wait till the world of murderers and burglars molests me or tempts me I shall wait for ever; and what is said about the world in the Bible, if it means only that, is great humbug,—because perfectly useless to me; but if I regard the world of worldly men, the world of those who love mammon better than God, the world of drunkards, gamblers, spendthrifts, misers, gossipers, fools, as the world I have to steer clear of, then I see the application, and the extreme need of the Bible warnings very plainly."

"But have you a right, according to your own view of things, to condemn others so largely?"

"Not till they are thrust upon me as patterns

to follow, or as an authority to dread; then I do not condemn them; but I will not lie, by saying that they are good and wise whom I know to be bad and foolish; nor for the sake of a seeming worthless charity resign my independence. But, Wykham," he added, after a short interval, "why do you talk of *my* views, and *my* ground, as if they were not yours every bit as much?"

"I wish they were, old fellow; but I fancy they'd be astonished in the regiment if you told them that Fred Wykham had set up for a religious man, and I won't play the hypocrite at any rate."

"I should like very much, Fred, if you will allow me, to know what your idea of a religious man is?"

"Oh! you know well enough; a man who goes to church, and reads the bible, and doesn't swear, and that sort of thing."

"Rather a queer jumble isn't it, Fred?" asked Oakfield, good-humouredly, "but taking your definition, I should say you were a religious man; for I never hear you swear; I believe you go to church, and I dare say you read the bible—eh?"

"Yes, I do occasionally; but still I can't say I feel a religious man."

"Very likely not; for I don't the least accept your definition; it's all very well not to swear,

of course, but no more than may be said of some of the wickedest scoundrels on earth; going to church hasn't much to do with the matter, I suspect, one way or the other; reading the bible indeed is another thing, but it will no more make a man religious than reading a couple of pages of Bacon *per diem* will make him wise. A wise man will read Bacon and become wiser, and a good man will read the bible and become better. A religious man, even though not a Christian (for recollect that your definition excluded all the non-Christian religious world), will probably be a bible-reader, but it does not the least follow that a bible-reader will be a religious man; indeed, we see that practically, in nine cases out of ten, it does *not* follow. All read the bible,—hardly any are religious."

"What do you call a religious man then?"

"In two words, one who fears God, and loves God and man."

"That is rather vague, is it not?"

"No, not vague; comprehensive."

"But how is one to know whether a man fears God or not? There are so many ways in which men may live, all saying that they fear God."

"Assuredly, and who shall know, and who need know except the man himself? What is it to you to establish to my satisfaction that you fear God?

know it yourself, and you will find that enough. I and my neighbours shall find it out by and bye if it is necessary for you or us that we should do so."

"I wish I did know it," said Wykham sadly.

"Ah, yes, my dear Fred! that is quite a different matter; but let me tell you this—do you think I am coming the parson over you, Fred?" he said, abruptly.

"No no,—go on."

"Well then—I am not such a treacherous fool as to tell you that you are very likely serving God, when you think yourself you are not. Not only do you know best, but you are the only one who knows anything at all about the matter;—but don't think yourself worse than you are; I was vexed and displeased with myself once because I thought I didn't come up to people's notions of a religious man, but I wish now not to come up to their idea, but my own; this is not lower than theirs I hope; I am sure it is not easier, but it makes me freer, and so happier, and so, I think, more able to serve God. I was distressed that I could not like going to church, that I always found it dull, that I still hated sermons, that in many ways I could not bring myself to feel as I found so many good men saying they felt."

"Well, well," said Wykham, rather eagerly, "that is just my case, I know it's very wrong."

"Why?" said Oakfield, "why admit it to be wrong? Why condemn yourself so hastily?"

Wykham looked surprised. "Of course," he said, "it must be wrong not to like being good and religious, and all that."

"Very wrong indeed, but let us be sure that we understand what good and religious are. Be free, Fred. It is a perilous thing for a man to emancipate himself, but he may dare to do it if he lays on a thousand-fold extra precautions against licence and self-indulgence. But I feel for you, Fred, for I have felt the same thing myself, and so, I am certain, do a great many of us; and I believe many of us go to the bad, in despair at not being able to accommodate ourselves to a given limited standard of the good, held up, not by our own conscience and experience, but those of others. Let us give ourselves a fair chance. While you do your duty, and do it not to man, but to God, do not distress yourself because a certain religious method which other men have adopted, and been right to adopt, because it suited them, does not suit, and therefore cannot and need not, nay, should not, be adopted by you. Do not spend your energies in trying to like going to church and to enjoy sermons, but in trying to fear God; to think, to govern and restrain yourself."

They had reached their house, and went up to

sit in the verandah till dinner time. Wykham looked very serious: he was not accustomed to deliberate thought (though often harassed by ruffings of mental activity which he had not felt the duty of encouraging), and the process was of course hard and painful to him. He was fair and honest too as the day; this was one of those qualities which gave that hearty sunshine to his countenance, and made all love him, and he felt Oakfield's words pleasant, and distrusted them for that very reason.

"I am suspicious, Oakfield," he said, after a long silence, "of anything that offers to make good easy."

"God forbid that I should so lie as to make any such offer, I am glad indeed that you said that. I should have made mischief indeed, and babbled villanously, had you gone away with an impression that your friend advised a relaxation of self-government. All I ask is this, what are the temptations in life that most assail you? You are silent, but you know them, or can know them. It is fairer to speak for oneself than to force a confidence. I will tell you my experience; see if your own at all answers to it. I know that the things which make good so very hard to me are the lusts of the flesh, and a love of things seen and apparent, and a great carelessness about things unseen and real; that is, especially, God. I might name many more; but

these will do. Now I believe that so far all young men are tempted alike, especially by those passions, which destroy so many of us. Now I say that religion to me consists, firstly, in subduing these passions, and learning to look upward as a man, not to follow my natural tendency and grow downward as a beast; this is not easy, Fred, believe me: the only ease I take, the only ease I recommend to you, is to reject whatever pokes itself between me and these great objects, either professing to be objects themselves, in which case they lie, or to be means by which I may attain my object; I will try the means; if they are good and helpful, well; I will use them, and thank God; if not, I will pass them by: if they still clamour that they are essential means, I will still say they lie, and disregard them; and further, I will claim for myself the sole right of saying whether or not they are a means and a help to me or not; and if they are not, I will not be persuaded to say they are, though they prove themselves to be so to every other single man in the world. In that extreme and impossible case, I should prefer owning myself to be a monster in nature, to telling a lie, and pretending to trust to a lie; as matters really are, there are very many, an increasing number every day, who are in the same boat; who begin to acknowledge that we must discern with our own eyes,

and not our neighbours' ; that such self-reliance is not presumptuous because it is necessary; that listless dependence on others is presumptuous in the literal sense of the word, because it takes up unexamined, uncarned, and claims as its own, what belongs only to those who thought it out in the first instance. A man *may* go over the same train of thought, and arrive at the same result ; and in this way so many orthodox churchmen are also good and honest men ; but he may just as fairly and more naturally arrive at much the same result by a different line of thought."

" Why more naturally ? The natural thing is to follow the stream."

" The natural thing for the unthinking, listless, essentially irreligious men, I grant you, but not for the thoughtful. Consider, if you and I have a problem to work out, we sit down, and if we both hit upon exactly the same line of reasoning, it would be thought a strange coincidence."

" I see, I see, — well, but now, Oakfield, the drift of all this ? "

" That I advise you, my dear Fred, to do what I wish to do, to put honestly to yourself your object, viz. : to overcome yourself, and to think of God and the unseen, more than the world and the seen, and to work to this object with all your energies, to use such means as you know help you,

not to distract yourself by pretending to find assistance in those which really do not. Above all, to think for yourself, and act upon your own thoughts."

"And defy your cutters," said Wykham, getting up, laughing and stretching himself, "and so we return with true logical method to our starting point, and bring our rambling conversation back to the man who cut you behind Jacko. But, Oakfield! one question more before dinner. After all this do you intend to go to church to-morrow?"

"Well," said Oakfield, laughing, but hesitating, "yes, but I won't say why, now, we've had enough."

So saying, he took his friend's arm, and they descended to the dining room.

Wykham was unusually silent, for he was excited by hearing, for the first time, the language of emancipation disconnected from the licentiousness which his honest heart revolted from. A great fact, indeed, if it shall restore to their proper place those honourable impulses, that frank instinctive virtue, which had hitherto felt half guilty for want of a rule to walk by. All these, then, it seems, are of God; gentlemanliness, honour, whatever good things commend themselves to me, these actually *are*, and I need not be afraid of Religion's ignoring them. My self-restraint, it appears, has been re-

ligious, though I did not venture to call it so: I am better than I knew; this is encouraging,—but to conquer myself—to live in and for the infinite rather than the finite;—Ah! that is hard: the encouragement is not more than I need for such a task as that. Yet again I may strive to do this task in silence, in consoling incognito: the strife will be between God and myself; and though the world think me not religious, though my nearest friends know not what I am about, think perhaps that I am about idle things, yet my strife will go on none the less; and the fruits will be as genuine, though to all others invisible: God will know them, and I too.

Such was the sting that the conversation behind Jacko left in Wykham's breast; we shall not say it was a crisis in his life—that he had been thoughtless and now became thoughtful; but we say this, that that night he thought, that night he prayed, not as a form-bound slave, but as a hopeful child, and that "a freer and a wiser man he rose upon the morn."

CHAP. II.

"But who, if he be called upon to face
Some awful moment, to which Heaven has joined
Great issues, good or bad for human kind,
Is happy as a lover; and attired
With sudden brightness, like a man inspired;
And, through the heat of conflict, keeps the law
In calmness made, and sees what he foresaw."

WORDSWORTH.

WHILE Oakfield was recruiting his health, still indifferent, at Simla,—while Herby was going through his work well and creditably at Winchester, enjoying, in something like their full extent, the great advantages of that ancient and glorious institution,—while the rest of the Oakfield family pursued their peaceful course, blessing and blessed, at Leatheburn,—while England, to take a wider range, was recovering her self-complacency after the Trafalgar Square outbreak of the 10th of April, 1848, so that the low moan of her suffering millions was for a time overpowered by the general rejoicing over the stability of her glorious institution,—while Europe was being deluged by the

revolutionary, and let us hope, fertilising lava stream that flowed from the unrestful Parisian crater, Anglo-India was becoming involved in her own troubles. It is a matter of history how the Punjab was settled after the Sutlej campaign; how, by the counsel of the then ruling influences in India, the native dynasty was permitted to survive under British control; how, in the absence of those who had set this machinery in motion, the machinery itself was first involved in the working, then checked, then violently overturned; how local circumstances connected with Mooltan demanded the substitution of a new man for the popular Dewan Moolraj; how the two officers who were sent to superintend this petty revolution were foully and treacherously murdered; how the paltry retribution that was sought to be enacted for this villany, was dribbled out into a more and more absorbing agitation; till, by a judicious tampering with an assassin, the Punjab was fomented into a revolt, and in the beginning of autumn it was found necessary again to assemble an army at the frontier; when at last the vigour, so long dormant, began to bestir itself, and a force better equipped, perhaps, than any that had yet taken the field in India, began from all quarters its march of concentration upon the north-west frontier, under the imposing title of

the "Army of the Punjab." Early in October, Oakfield heard what he had long expected, that the 90th Light Infantry were ordered to form a part of the 3rd Infantry Brigade. The army was to assemble, however, at Ferozepore, so that there was no immediate necessity for his going down. With Wykham it was different. His regiment (the 12th Cavalry it will be remembered) formed a part of the Mooltan force which was already on its march: it was with deep regret that the two friends parted.

"Good bye, Oakfield," said Wykham, "this has been a memorable time to me, this last two months; however, I shan't make a speech," then in his old tone, "we shall meet again, soon, probably. There will be a regular row, you'll see, and when we have knocked Moolraj on the head, we shall come up and join you. Stanton's troop is certain to be ordered up; so please heaven, and the Sikh artillery, we shall all three meet again, ere long."

"Good bye, Fred, God bless you," was all that Oakfield could say. It was a great trial to him to lose his friend. At war with society, it may be imagined how he clung to those who loved him, and he found more help and satisfaction from Wykham's society than any body's else in the world. There was a strength in the latter which

always made itself felt. Oakfield's more cultivated mind and (although rather the younger of the two) his far greater experience had, of course, much more to communicate, but his naturally softer, perhaps too speculative nature had much to learn from the instinctive rectitude and ready vigour of his friend; "If Wykham has right and wrong clearly before him," Oakfield once wrote to Middleton, "he will go straight *to* the one and *from* the other, without let or hesitation; apparently, though of course not really, without difficulty. If Wykham ever becomes, as he will become after his first sorrow, a thoughtful man, he will be one of the toughest enemies the devil will have had for a long time."

Meanwhile, he remained in the hills till the 20th of October, and then, after about a month and a half's sojourn in the wonderful climate of the Himalayas, a sojourn which, though so short, had yet greatly improved his health, commenced his journey back to Ferozepore, very different from his troublesome trip in September. It was now the latter part of October, the rain had ceased for some weeks, the streams had run themselves out, the earth still retained, though too soon to lose, the fresh verdure which the rains had created, and all nature seemed in sympathy with the European population, who

sprang up, as it were, with the delight of released prisoners to hail the first fresh breezes of the incipient cold season. But fresh and beautiful as that October month was, it was the herald of a cold season, different enough from the ordinary times of Christmas enjoyment. Already the whole North-West was stirred by the approach of war, not war as it once was in India; all testimony agrees as to the changed and far sterner character of Indian warfare since the Mahratta enemies were exchanged for Sikhs. The struggles of the Sutlej, the fearful night at Ferozeshah, where, if ever, the Indian empire was indeed in jeopardy, were still remembered; and although it were a base libel to say that these, or any recollections, dimmed the expectation, or lowered the sanguine courage, of those who were now again called upon to complete the discomfiture of the same obstinate enemies, yet it is true that, to thoughtful minds, war in India is a far more serious thing than it used to be; a game which, ever since that great turning-point in Indian history, that "beginning of the end," the war in Affghanistan, has been at once more expensive and more hazardous.

Oakfield found things not much changed in his regiment, but what change there was, for the better. The bustle of public affairs gave that excitement, the desire for which is the cause

of half the private quarrels, jealousies, and persecutions that go on. There was still a dislike felt towards him, and he was generally avoided, but the dislike was now passive, and his principles of toleration were not tried by marked insolence. Perkins was the only officer that spoke to him, and he but seldom and unwillingly, for Perkins was not disposed to espouse Oakfield's cause against the regiment; Stafford, Brooks, and Straddles industriously fomented the ill-feeling; the rest listlessly acquiesced in it. One or two officers of Horse Artillery, who had known Oakfield from the day he joined, and who (although they expressed surprise and regret at his method of treating Stafford, whom they detested) had nevertheless, throughout, felt a consistent and reasonable belief, that however much Oakfield might differ from them, it was impossible that a courteous, gentlemanly, strong-minded man, as they knew him to be, should be a coward; and in this belief had throughout evinced an honourable superiority to the contemptible fear of public opinion, being aggrieved at the coldness with which Oakfield was everywhere regarded, and touched by the patience and dignity with which he bore it, advised him to apply for an exchange: but when Oakfield firmly declined, in a way that showed it would be useless to repeat the suggestion, and pointed out how inconsistent any appearance of

retreat from the ground he had taken would be with that profession of rightful confidence which he had all along maintained, they were silent, and by their silence assented to the justice of what was said. But, indeed, Oakfield had not much cause to regret an exclusion which he hardly felt; had a triumphal procession been prepared for him in cantonments he would not have benefited, for there was a double attraction for him now at the civil lines. Stanton's troop, as Wykham had anticipated, was ordered to the frontier, and Stanton himself, in anticipation of its arrival, had come on to stay with the Middletons at Ferozepore. The troop had arrived, and been detained at Ferozepore some short time, when Oakfield returned, and the latter, though slow to observe such things, could not but think that his friend was differently impressed with Miss Middleton from what he himself had been. Nor was he surprised at this; his only cause of surprise was that he himself had been so comparatively unimpressed; yet, as he observed and questioned himself with that merciless candour which had now become habitual to him, he seemed to perceive how far more congenial to Miss Middleton's impetuous though affectionate temper, to her flashing wit and ambitious, though perfectly feminine nature, must be the calm force, the unruffled caustic strength of

Stanton, than his own painful, anxious, darkling search after truth. But however this might be, Oakfield saw with sincere joy the genial influence which Miss Middleton's society exercised over Stanton's heart, so strong and warm for all his short and somewhat crabbed manner; and could have smiled at the unconscious acknowledgment which Miss Middleton made, by her subdued inquiring tone, to the magnetic force of his friend's character. It was a sad day when that party at Ferozepore was broken up. Mr. Middleton, of course, remained at his post alone; for he was glad to take this opportunity of sending down his sister to pay a long promised visit to a friend at Allahabad; she was loth to go, but perceiving in her brother's playful assurance that women were an encumbrance when bustling work was in prospect, an indication of his real wish, not only for her safety but to be himself unfettered, consented. We will pass over a busy week of preparation, the gradual assembly of the advanced portion of the army, and the unopposed passage of the Sutlej, that great river, which had been the extreme point of the previous campaign operations, forming the base on which, on the present occasion, they were commenced, and take up our story at the time when, on the evening of the 22nd November, 1848, the British army was encamped at Ram-

nuggur, all regretting the inauspicious opening of the campaign which they had witnessed that morning, when, in a fruitless cavalry skirmish, the lives of many brave men, and more than one distinguished officer, had been sacrificed, with absolutely no result. The army, after this unfortunate affair, halted at Ramnuggur, on the left bank of the Chenab, fronting the enemy, who were strongly entrenched upon the opposite side of the river, waiting for the heavy guns which were in the rear. These joined the army on the 29th. On the 30th it was known in camp that a force was to be detached under Sir J. Thackwell to turn the left flank of the enemy. Oakfield was spending the day as usual in Stanton's tent when the intelligence that his regiment was ordered to march reached him. He hastened home, home being the ground occupied by his own corps, and by his own tent, *par excellence*, and at midnight the detached force began its march. It was a calm, but very cold, night; Oakfield rode along silently, wrapped in his cloak, amply engaged in looking at the stars, and with his own reflections. He had been greatly struck, during the few weeks of his experience, by the difference between an army in cantonments and an army in the field, and the vast superiority of the latter; and he came to the conclusion that the cause of this superiority

consisted principally in the fact, that an army in the field was at work, that work involved seriousness, that seriousness to a certain extent induced reflection, and that reflection in some degree dissolved the wretched tie of a wretched public opinion, and called forth something of individual character and independent action: that although the individual character so brought to light might be, and most probably in most instances was, weak and bad, yet the character of few or none was, individually, so bad as that most wretched and contemptible aggregate of weakness and evil which at other times asserted its coarse domination. He was struck, and half amused at the manner in which this nascent independence evinced itself in his own case, how greatly the bitterness subsided, now that men ventured to think and act a little for themselves; the majority, hitherto passive imitators, followed their own bent and returned, not indeed to anything like intimacy or cordiality, for that had never existed, but to commonly civil intercourse; while those only who, like Stafford and Straddles, entertained a real feeling of active animosity, kept up a sullen silence. Ought Oakfield to have allowed this arbitrary return to intercourse after so many weeks of equally arbitrary excommunication? Ought he to have required some apology, some explanation of the treatment he had met

with? He thought not. He perfectly understood the cause of the excommunication, he appreciated and allowed for the weakness, the timid following of others, which had made it general; he understood, also, and felt willing to help forward rather than thwart the good influences which now led to a change. "Besides," he thought, "if I professed to think so lightly of the ban of exclusion, nay, let me do myself justice, if I *did* think lightly of it, why should I pretend to make a fuss about its removal? I have not conceded an inch of the cause I took up; that is enough for me. I need not busy myself about my personal dignity; that will take care of itself, I dare say. 'What we owe to ourselves;' oh, much-abused phrase! I fancy we owe a good deal less than we pay in that quarter; a very large credit balance there, I imagine, with most of us."

So Oakfield evinced no surprise when first one officer, then another, asked him to drink beer* at mess, as a kind of tacit suspension of hostilities; and although Stafford and Co. were loud in their condemnation of such meanness, such want of self-respect, &c., yet the majority felt, and some acknowledged that this was of a piece with the rest of Oakfield's conduct, and they accepted his being

* Equivalent to the English custom of drinking wine with a person.

so open to conciliation now, when it would have been so easy to hold out and turn sulky, as a part proof of his having been consistent and sincere throughout. In fact, the impression which had obtained for a time during his trial, but which had given way to standing prejudices, began to revive; viz: that Oakfield was a queer sort of fellow, who took his own view of things, and did not care what other people thought of him. "And yet," said Perkins, who had distinguished himself in the Sutlej campaign on one occasion, "I shall be glad to see how he carries himself in action." Perhaps this thought had occurred to Oakfield too.

It was long and weary that night march: the column moved slowy up the left bank of the river, and it was not till sunset the next evening (1st December) that Sir J. Thackwell, being then at Wuzzeerabad, thought proper to cross the river. That night also was long and anxious. The column had marched more than twenty miles that day; all were cold, hungry, weary; the night, too, was dark as pitch, but it was necessary to cross at once, and the passage was immediately begun. The hours passed on that night, and still in long succession the Artillery, with their guns and horses, were being transported across. The morning broke without any interruption from the enemy during this anxious operation, and at about noon on the 2nd

December, the column recommenced its march, now down the right bank of the Chenab, upon the left flank of the enemy, being separated by the river from the main body and the Commander-in-chief. They marched all day, and halted at sunset. That night Oakfield had his first experience of campaigning hardships; the column marching light, had left all equipage and creature comforts behind them, and that cold night was passed upon the hard ground. The contemplative man was pleased at this, the first fruits of privation, and at the universal cheerfulness with which it was borne. At dawn on the 3rd, the column pursued its march with the prospect of being engaged shortly with the enemy. The Commander-in-chief's guns were heard all the morning, as he attracted the attention of the Sikhs in front. At one o'clock there was a halt to rest and water the horses; this had scarcely been accomplished, when the galloping in of the advanced pickets, and the opening of the enemy's artillery, gave intimation of his advance. The engagement of Sadoolapoor was of that unsatisfactory nature, a victory useless because not used.

That night the British column, wearied and disappointed with the result of the combat, lay down at their arms to guess at the events of the coming day.

Not so the enemy. All night he was engaged

in removing his shattered guns, and effecting a swift and silent retreat.

The Commander-in-chief being apprised of the retreat of the whole Sikh force, immediately sent two regiments of European cavalry in pursuit, under that great pursuing officer, Sir W. Gilbert; and the whole British army crossed the Chenab.

Then followed an anxious and a vacant month; while the enemy remained secure in his jungle retreat about Mooney and Russool, daily adding to the difficulties and defensive properties of the ground he had selected, the British army remained in comparative inactivity, with the exception of almost daily reconnoisances and counter projects to defeat the cunning and activity of the enemy in escheating their camels.

So the two enemies lay, looking at each other, the Sikhs awaiting the arrival of Chutter Singh, when he should have reduced Attok; the British looking out for the army which was to reinforce them upon the downfall of Mooltan—but though there was thus little stirring in the way of actual warfare, yet an army on the *qui vive* in presence of the enemy is seldom dull. Constant rumours created an unfading interest for those who live upon such things; the stroll about camp in the morning, the repetition of it in the evening, hearing upon each occasion new anecdotes, new

reports, new prophecies, new croakings; the social parties at mess in the evening, when each regiment was drawn together by a bond of fellowship different enough from the slack one that had held them in cantonments; all this, together with such books as could be mustered, to be passed from hand to hand; above all, the consciousness that whatever might have been said in the Sadoolapoor despatch, the real work of the campaign was still to come, helped out those short December and January days quickly, and not unpleasantly.

To Oakfield the life was all agreeable, for it was new, and besides this, to a contemplative admirer of Carlyle, the self-possessed energy, the silent intention to attain its point and do its work, in short, the genuineness of an army in the field, was an engaging spectacle. He passed much of his time with Stanton and amongst the Artillery officers, and made other acquaintance also in camp, one especially, an old chum of Stanton, Jenkyns, now on the Commander-in chief's staff, a great authority in the midst of the thousand and one rumours that day by day were born, flourished, subsided, and died. His old friends, too, the 81st, were in camp, and he found them quite ready to forget all differences; all except Cade, who was an intimate friend of Stafford's, and fraternised with him most determinedly. But the others re-

membered Oakfield principally in connection with Vernon, and his kindness and friendship to their brother officer had left an impression on them all, while other things were forgotten.

In fact, Oakfield found himself after his long solitude, being strangely forced into social habits, and although he still sought in vain, and still regretted the absence of that moral earnestness which should give its character to war as to every thing else, yet he was willing to accept, as a far better substitute for this than any he had yet found, the physical earnestness (if the expression may be allowed) which did certainly animate and elevate, far above their ordinary level, those around him. He dined generally at his own mess, always indeed, except when he was with Stanton, at whose tent on the 11th of January he had been spending most of the day. They were walking up and down the long street in the evening, talking as usual about the campaign, when they saw Jenkyns.

"Well, Jenkyns, any news?"

"Nothing *pucka** that I know of,—you have heard the report, I suppose?"

"No: what report?"

* *Pucka*, literally, ripe, mature; hence used in a great variety of metaphorical senses in the Anglo-Hindustanee dialect.

"Why, that Attok has fallen; but I fancy it's only a native rumour; at least, I know the Chief hasn't heard anything of it. I must be off, though, I'm going to dine with the Adjutant-general."

"Humph," said Stanton, "if that's a true bill, we shan't be here long."

"Why not?"

"Why not, — because, oh sagest Bachelor of Arts, with 40,000 men in our front, it were inexpedient to await the arrival of Lord knows how many thousand more, — we shall have an action, you'll see, within a week if this is anything more than a *banau*."*

"How many times have you been in action, Stanton?"

"Let me see — Moodkee, Ferozeshah, Aliwal, Sobraon, that's four, and Ramnugger, and Sadoolapoor the other day, six, — and I never once got hit yet."

"Beware of Nemesis," said Oakfield, laughing.

"Well, what are you looking so solemn about?" asked Stanton after a pause.

"Why," said Oakfield hesitatingly, "I feel rather anxious as to the truth of this rumour" (Stanton stared); "because," he added, "though I know that in my affair at Ferozepore I asserted the truth, yet I know also that it was only half

* *Banau*, a make-up, a falsehood.

the truth; it is not necessary, I am aware, that I should have an opportunity of asserting the other half, but if it should occur, you must perceive how great a relief it will be."

"Explain," said Stanton.

"You understand me, I am certain, but you always take a pleasure in making one express in terms what one would rather imply, you often remind me of Middleton in that."

"Oakfield," interrupted Stanton.

"Well?"

"Don't shirk, but explain."

"You are a bully, Stanton, as Wykham always says, and we are very weak to submit to you; but what I mean is this, and you know it: having asserted the superior claim of moral courage, it is a great boon to be able to assert the inferior, but still essential, importance of physical courage. Now do you see?"

"I begin to have a glimmering."

"Old mole! well, you see it will be a satisfaction to be able to show those fellows in action, that I am physically as little afraid of cannon and muskets as they are."

"Very true, Oakfield: and I have often thought and wished the same on your account. Do you feel confident in yourself, however, in this latter respect?"

Oakfield coloured violently; "I hardly thought that you suspected me, Stanton."

"My dear boy, pardon me; I wouldn't have hurt you for the world; you have had enough, heaven knows, without your friends, as you say, suspecting you. I don't suspect you, my dear fellow, one half as much as I do myself: that is, as to the existence of every true and noble intention; but what I mean is this, asserting a principle is a very different thing — I don't say easier, I dare say it is far harder, but still it *is* very different — from feeling at home under a hot fire. Brave men have often half winced under their first experiment, and our next engagement will be all but your first; for you know you Infantry people had nothing to do the other day at Sadoolapoor."

"I understand," said Oakfield, in a kind tone, "and I beg your pardon for having for an instant misunderstood you. It *is* a very different thing, I grant you, and quite new and untried to me, and so, as he that putteth his armour on may not boast as he that putteth it off, I will not vaunt myself a hero. Nor do I think myself a hero; that is, one of those people who are very sanguinely indifferent to, apparently almost unconscious of, danger; I dare say I shall half wince, as you say, in my inmost heart when I first find myself under fire: the only thing I venture to assert confidently is that this wincing shall not overpower me. I say I shall

not be afraid, as confidently as I say I shall not lie or steal."

"There is a great difference, Oakfield: one is often purely constitutional. Many men, who not only do not lie or steal, but are really good men, are positively unable to subdue personal fear."

"That I deny *in toto*."

"My dear fellow, you have never tried."

"That *argumentum ad hominem* is never a particularly courteous, and very seldom a sound, one. If we only affirm or deny within the bounds of our own experience, we are somewhat limited, I think. I still deny *in toto* the proposition 'that good men are unable to subdue physical fear,' as treason to God and the soul."

"You speak warmly, Oakfield."

"I do, Stanton."

"But, to drop the appeal to experience, since that offends you"—

"Only when it would set itself up against eternal principles, in comparison with which its testimony is not worth a rush."

"Well, well, I say, dropping that, you are carried away rather when you say that a good man is necessarily free from physical fear."

"I do not say so; I merely say he may overcome it as surely as any other temptation; of course there are different degrees of courage and

fear implanted in men constitutionally, as there are of beauty, of strength, of intellect; and he who has much courage constitutionally is far happier than he who has little; yet he must not boast of that which he has only received; and the man of great constitutional timidity is not one whit worse, though far less fortunate, not one whit more contemptible, though far more to be pitied, than the man of great constitutional courage."

"A timid man no worse than a brave man, Oakfield? A little paradoxical, my dear boy."

"No; not *worse* in any other sense than an ugly is worse than a handsome, a stupid than a clever man: that is to say no worse morally, but more unfortunate."

"A man who takes a gun," said Stanton, pursuing his *reductio ad absurdum*, "no better than he who runs away! Well, I dissent to that theory; at least I shall take the liberty of preferring one to the other next week."

"You are less fair than usual, Stanton."

"Because you are more than ever paradoxical. I tell you it is the fault of your mind; you always seem to delight in dissenting from those things which are most universally acknowledged."

"Because in morals the things most universally acknowledged are seldom without a great alloy of falsehood; and in no one more than this of courage;

at any rate, Stanton, hear this: you say a man who runs away is worse than a man who takes a gun; infinitely worse; as much worse as the man who speaks the truth is than one who tells a lie. Yet it would be hard to say that a man of a reserved cautious temperament, who yet always spoke the truth, was worse than a naturally frank and out-spoken man. Again, I grant you that the latter is far more happily constituted, inasmuch as he is far less than the former tempted to the sin of lying; but I will not be so grossly unjust as to condemn the man who, under far greater disadvantages, speaks the truth; I will rather esteem him the better of the two, as having done the hardest thing; in the same way a clever man is far more fortunate than a very dull one; but I will respect the dull, but industrious, worker, who, by cultivation, attains to his ultimate possible of intelligence, more than that other who is content with admiring the gifts which he has received from nature, and has done nothing for himself."

"Where are you getting to, Oakfield?"

"To the point;—so a constitutionally timid man, who lets his timidity conquer him, is guilty of sin, as every man is who gives way to his besetting temptation, whatever it is; but the timid man who does his duty—that is, in our case who fights well—is not worse, but rather better, than the care-

less fire-eater who, at little or no sacrifice, does likewise. Cowardice consists not in being naturally afraid, but in not overcoming the natural fear: natural fear is a defect which a man cannot help; for which therefore he may not, without injustice, be blamed; but it is the work of all our lives to overcome our defects, and he who does not, but is overcome by them, is the sinner, coward, liar, or whatever the natural defect may be to which he has yielded. Fancy if people were to talk of 'a man who cannot get over his murderous propensities!'"

"You admit, then, that cowardice is a thing for which a man may be blamed, despised, and punished."

"Do I admit that a liar may be blamed, and despised, and punished? You might as well ask me that. Falsehood is cowardice,—cowardice is falsehood; though I think the world is often cruelly unjust in its punishment of it."

"I thought so," said Stanton, smiling.

"For," continued Oakfield, without noticing the interruption, "it punishes cowardice *not* because it is sin, but because it is inconvenient. If it punished it on high grounds, the coward would not be more severely punished than the adulterer; the man conquered by his fear than the man conquered by his lust. This is one injustice. Another is that

men do not (though this is more pardonable, for in a great degree they cannot) allow for the different force of temptation in different cases; but certainly society is unjust and wicked in punishing cowardice, as if it were, I may almost say, the only sin."

"There are few, or none, so bad."

"Granted; but there *are* some: and many, but a few degrees better, which are not punished at all."

"But how is it, Oakfield, that you are always putting yourself in the position of advocate for the defendant? you talk now as if you were pleading in mitigation of cowardice; and so always you seem uneasy till you have found some ground of dissent from public opinion; and yet I believe, in ordinary matters of right and wrong, such as falsehood and truth, cowardice and courage (where you must excuse my saying refinement is rather superfluous, and the instinct of the honourable mind is the most conclusive argument), public opinion is oftener correct than not."

"Perhaps," said Oakfield, with a gentle concession that touched Stanton acutely, "you are so far right that I may have an unhealthy desire for singularity, and yet, Stanton, I do believe, indeed, that God's truth and man's opinion are, as a general rule, so diverse, that he who would seek to live

by the former, must needs dissent for the most part from the latter. But good night, old fellow, we have been both rubbing our rough edges against the other a little more than usual, a good deal more than I like; but if we are engaged soon, I trust you will find that, theorist as you think me, my practical conclusion is much the same as yours."

"I know it, I know it," said Stanton, and he shook his friend's hand far more warmly than was the wont of his undemonstrative nature, for he was conscious that his tone in the preceding conversation had been scarcely altogether kind.

"That man's temper," he said to himself as he walked towards the mess tent, "gets better and sweeter every day, and I am a rough cantankerous Turk to try him so; and yet his eternal dissent *does* provoke me; I believe if I asserted as an universally admitted fact that good was better than evil, he would fidget about till he could find out some ground of opposition or qualification to take up. I hope to God his theories will not unman him in action, that he will not be musing, and refining when he should be leading the Jacks*; but," he concluded abruptly, "I don't fear that."

Meanwhile Oakfield wended his way back to his part of the camp.

* A popular name in the army for sepoys.

"Stanton will not see," such was his half-uttered soliloquy, "how far I agree with him; but surely God's bidding is a nobler motive to bravery than man's,—I doubt whether a sense of honour ever kept men up to the mark better than the fear of God and the greatest indifference to man did David, and Deborah, and Zwingle, and Oliver Cromwell and his Ironsides. God knows I feel no rash self-confidence just at this moment, and yet," looking up at the stars, "he knows that I do feel it very impossible that the fear of a musket ball should turn me from what I do heartily acknowledge to be my duty to him."

"Halloa! Oakfield," cried Perkins, as he entered the mess tent, where they were already seated for dinner; "don't look down in the mouth, man; Attok taken, Chutter Singh *dauring** down like the devil, — march to-morrow, knock the Sikhs into the middle of next week the day after; ah! that's it, old fellow; by Jove, we shall all be C. B's. in a fortnight."

It was reported the next morning that an express had come in from Mackeson, the political agent with the Governor-general, and soon after it was known that the rumour of the preceding day was true, that Attok had surrendered, and that

* To *daur*, to rush or hurry.

Chutter Singh was in full march to reinforce his son. It required no great military science or experience to see the necessity of attacking the enemy at once, before his numbers, already excessive, were so formidably increased; and nobody was surprised when the orders appeared in the afternoon, for the whole force to move at daybreak on the following morning. Oakfield met Stanton in the course of the evening; both felt that their last interview had been a little less friendly than usual, and were glad to meet again before separated by the active duties of the next day.

"Well, Oakfield! you see I was right; you'll smell powder enough before the next few days are over; this time the day after to-morrow, Ned, and I dare say you will have seen your first, and I my sixth general action; perhaps one or both of us will have solved all problems; eh, old boy!"

They talked for some time in their old friendly style, carefully avoiding all subjects on which they were likely to disagree. They recalled their overland voyage, spoke each of his own antecedents in England, of Hajeepoor, and Arthur Vernon, of Wykham, and the Middletons, on which last subject Stanton, under the influence of the moment, approached as near to tenderness as his reserve would allow him to do to a third party; and with a few remarks as to the next day's march, parted.

Oakfield dined at the mess as usual; the camp resounded with the bustle of preparation till about ten o'clock at night, from which time till daybreak the profoundest silence prevailed.

At daybreak on the 12th, the whole army accordingly moved to Dhingee, within a few miles of the enemy's position. The orders of the night detailed the position of regiments, &c., for the battle of the next day. Perhaps from the well-known strength of the enemy's position, and the numbers and courage of Shere Singh's troops, a scarcely less bloody combat than that which actually ensued was anticipated by all former opponents of the Sikhs; many hands were shaken that night, and many an honest fervent wish for the safety of friends on the coming day, fell from lips which, before another sun had set, were cold and fixed in death.

Although Oakfield's health was greatly improved, he still retained that painful invalid symptom, restlessness at nights. On this night, the eve of the battle, wearied by the long march of the morning, and the exciting rumours and looking forward of the evening, he soon fell fast asleep, but paid for this rare luxury by waking up at one in the morning. Finding himself unable to go to sleep again immediately, he got up, partly dressed himself, and stood for some time in

the door of his tent. That was the time to test himself; to see whether his resolutions, his intentions, his faith, would stand the depressing influence of the night watches; who does not know the unstrung, unnerved, even desponding feeling, which so often attends upon a midnight waking? The heavy weight of sleep seems to deaden the will, and the drowsy man will sometimes shrink in dismay at the thought of some task of the morrow, which the night before he had resolved to do. There is many a man who, at such a time, will feel incapable of the very effort which in a few hour he will certainly accomplish; but that will is well trained to dominion, which even at this hour can assert its wonted mastery; that resolution is strong which the powers of darkness cannot shake. Oakfield looked round; it was a dark cold night: the moon was near the full, but almost continually obscured by black threatening clouds; there was a patrol passing, and the challenge of the sentinels seemed to mark rather than to disturb the silence; he could not see far, and where he could see, nothing but the dim outline of endless tents; the army of the Punjab was sleeping, many perhaps dreaming of scenes very different from that stern one which they should behold at waking. Oakfield stood and looked and thought, for about half-an-hour, glad and thankful to find how com-

pletely he was master of himself, how collectedly he could look forward to the call of duty which awaited him, and then groping his way back to his bed, slept till he heard the harsh notes of the bugles sounding the *reveillé*. What anxious, what hopeful, what various thoughts did those unsparing, unthinking bugles waken into life!

The whole army was in motion shortly after daybreak, marching towards the enemy's position, which was but a few miles off in a straight line; but the march was lengthened to about ten miles by a considerable détour to the right, which the British general thought it advisable to make, partly to distract the enemy's attention, but principally to get as clear as possible of the thick jungle on which the Sikhs appeared so much to rely. The 90th, as has been mentioned, belonged to the 3rd Infantry division, and were one of the two native regiments brigaded with the Queen's 101st. The divisions marched separately in column, with deploying distance between them. The baggage was two or three miles in the rear, guarded principally by Irregular Cavalry. Oakfield rode close to his own company, dismounting and falling in with it whenever a halt occurred, that is to say, every ten minutes; for an army advancing upon a hostile position, and also moving across a country full of obstacles, seldom proceeds for a

longer time without a halt. The tedium of this snail's progress was, however, relieved by the excitement of catching from time to time glimpses of bodies of the enemy, and an occasional interchange of shots between the reconnoitring parties of the two armies. In this way they moved on till nearly noon, when a pretty general halt seemed to have occurred, whereupon a general dismounting took place among the infantry officers, accompanied by an equally general requisition for the contents of knapsacks, and a corresponding demand for 'nips' from sundry queer shaped bottles. "Hallo, Jenkyns!" shouted Oakfield, as his friend the aide-de-camp galloped up, "where are you off at that rate?"

"Ah, Oakfield, is that you? I can't stop a moment, my good fellow," Jenkyns replied, pulling up his horse, however, with a jerk which almost threw him on his haunches, "I am just going to order the Horse Artillery to the front."

"But I say just wait a minute," said Oakfield, springing from the ground where most of the officers of the 90th were lounging in various attitudes with cheroots in their mouths; "these surely are our Irregular Cavalry, and not the enemy's, so close to us, just under the tree there?"

"Those? those are just the fellows we are going to make scarce! you see that high mound

about half-a-mile a-head, with a tent or two at the top of it? Well, that's their advance post; our heavy guns are just going to open upon it," and as he spoke, a wreath of white smoke suddenly rose three or four hundred yards a-head, and the deep-toned report of a heavy gun gave confirmation to his words.

"One moment more, that's a good fellow," cried Oakfield, laying his hand upon his horse's neck, and becoming rather excited, for the report of the first gun fired *in earnest* has the peculiarity of making the heart beat a second or two quicker; "you don't mean to say that we shall have to storm those heights out there?" pointing as he spoke to a low range of hills on the right front, with all the appearance of a large camp on the highest ridge.

Several of the 90th gathered round to listen to their conversation, for an aide-de-camp is a great authority in the day of battle.

"No, no," said Jenkyns, "that *is* their camp, but their whole army is drawn up in the jungle, just in front of us, a few hundred yards, say half-a-mile, on the other side of that village and mound, — Chillianwalla I believe they call it; and pretty tough work we shall have to turn them out. Their left rests on those heights, and I suppose we shall have to follow them up there, for of course they

will retreat in that direction. Well, good bye, old fellow, good luck to you; I can't stop a minute longer,—stayed five too many already,"—and with vicious dig of the spurs, away he went like a shot.

Oakfield followed him with his eyes, and shortly, issuing from a cloud of dust in the rear, he observed a body of British Cavalry trotting up sharply, in column of squadrons, and making a détour to the left; while shaving the regiments in their way and scattering right and left any stragglers on the road, some troops of Horse Artillery came thundering up at a canter.

"How are you, Stanton?" exclaimed one of the officers of the 90th, as, from some check in front, the troop to which Oakfield's friend belonged pulled up along-side of that corps. "As usual, you lucky dogs are always in for it first; leave a little for us, that's good fellows."

"Humph!" said Stanton, "no fear of our not doing that, my dear Sir; you'll have lots of it before the day is over, I can see. I've not forgotten Ferozeshah yet, and to-day will be no bad imitation of it, I expect. Oh! what a lovely shell! good, good, by Jove! right in the middle of them," he continued, watching the practice of the heavy guns with all the gusto of an artilleryman. "Well, Oakfield, my dear old boy," turning to him, "I only hope we shall both of us find our legs safe

and sound under the mess table to-morrow; *some* of us cannot, that's very certain. Do you feel your theory up to its work," he added, laughing, "now that it is going to be tested with practice?"

Oakfield replied to this with a smile, a nod, and a grasp of the hand, which was expressive enough, although perhaps rather in the Lord Burleigh style; "You're not the kind of man, any more than I am, I fancy, Stanton, to think much of presentiments and that style of thing."

"No," said the other, "I think not."

"You never have a feeling, an indescribable sensation (that's the expression) that you are likely to be killed or severely wounded."

"No," rejoined Stanton, slowly, with more hesitation than Oakfield expected; "no, I really don't think I do feel, or ever have felt, anything of the kind. I certainly feel, every action I go into, that, having escaped so often without a hurt (this will be, as I told you, my sixth general action), my chance on the Babbage calculation principles is lessening; but I always *do* hope, and more than half expect, to get off; indeed, I almost fancy I should feel more surprised than anything else if I was hit; absurd, of course; but I find the best plan (the pleasantest I mean, as well as the right one) is never to think of there being any danger in *anything* during an action; go a-head, thinking

only of your duty, and watching the shot as little as possible; it will be all right depend upon it."

"All falls in pat with my theory," said Oakfield."

"Well, then your theory is worth more than I was inclined to allow the other day. Well, here we are going on again;—What's that order?" (as the word of command, "The column will deploy into line," was repeated by successive shouts from regiment to regiment till it reached the 90th) "You had better be off, Oakfield. Good bye, my dear Ned; good luck."

"Good bye, dear Stanton. God bless you," responded Oakfield, shaking hands with his friend, while the guns slowly moved forward.

In a few moments they had broken again into a canter, and Oakfield drew his sword and fell in with his company, for the regiment was now beginning to move into line. On the mound already mentioned was posted a strong picket of the enemy. This was soon dispersed, and the mound taken possession of by the British troops. From this point the whole Sikh army could be descried, drawn up in order of battle. It was now three o'clock in the afternoon, and Lord Gough hesitated about making an attack that day. Considering, however, the proximity of the enemy to the ground which the Quarter-master General's department were

already beginning to mark out for an encampment, and that the Sikhs never had before and never might again venture so fair a front in the field with their whole force, he was probably justified, with the splendid force under his command, in seizing the opportunity offered by the presumption of the enemy. The Sikhs, as usual, opened their guns from a long range; this was replied to by the British heavy artillery halted in the line. After a cannonade on both sides for about an hour, the Cavalry and Horse Artillery were ordered to the front. Like hounds darting from the leash they dashed forward, and soon the rolling of wheels and the clanking of sabres and harness were lost in one continued roar from above a hundred pieces of artillery. On every side the shot crashed through the jungle; branches of trees were shattered and torn from their stems, rolling horses and falling men gave an early character to this fearful evening. During this cannonade the Infantry divisions had been lying down. The order to advance was now given to the 3rd division, which formed the left of the army, supported on the left by its Horse Artillery (amongst them that troop to which Stanton belonged), while to the left of the artillery again were the 3rd dragoons. That division accordingly advanced, with what fatal result to the gallant 24th is well known.

This regiment, together with the 25th N. I., formed the right brigade of the left division; either by an injudicious order, or, as stated in the official despatch, by mistaking a chance movement of their commandant's for a signal, the 24th broke into the double at a distance from the guns far too great to be accomplished at the charge; outstripping the native corps, they arrived breathless and exhausted at the guns, where a terrific and hitherto concealed fire of musketry awaited them. The native corps came up and well sustained their European brethren, but both were repulsed; not until twenty-one European officers, twelve sergeants, and four hundred and fifty rank and file of the 24th had been killed and wounded. The Horse Artillery moved to their support, and drove away the enemy in the act of cutting up the wounded. Meanwhile the left brigade of this division, including the 90th regiment, moved forward, formed line to their right, and overthrew that portion of the enemy which had obtained a temporary advantage over the right brigade. In this last movement Oakfield found and seized an opportunity of obtaining that individual distinction which he had so much desired. As the 90th regiment, formed in line, arrived amongst the enemy's guns, the old native officer, who carried the royal colour of the regiment, was cut down by

the blow of a Sikh tulwar.* As he fell, his slayer stretched forward to secure the prize, when Oakfield, who commanded the left centre company, seizing the colour from the falling man with his left hand, with his right warded off the descending blow which his adversary instantly aimed at him, then, with a successful delivery of the point of his own regulation sword (the one successful answer which that feeble weapon can make to the terrific slashing cuts of the Sikh broadsword), eased himself of his enemy, and retained the colour, which he carried till the conclusion of the action. The venerable Commander-in-chief was watching these proceedings with eager anxiety. If he was disappointed by the result of the infantry advance on the left, that of the right division was eminently successful, spiking the whole of the enemy's guns in their front, and dispersing the Sikhs themselves wherever they became visible. Such was the conduct of the right infantry division; on their right, again, was a brigade of European and Native Cavalry, supported by troops of Horse Artillery. The cavalry were required to follow up the success of the infantry by an effective charge.

* * * *

The ground thus lost upon the right by the

* *Tulwar*, broadsword.

"false movements" of the cavalry, and upon the left by the honourable failure of the gallant 24th, was subsequently recovered, but the sun had set some time, and it was necessary to collect the army together for the night; the enemy drew off the ground in good order,—not vanquished,—having recovered and taking with them nearly all the guns which had been captured. The Commander-in-chief rode along the whole line, giving directions to each division; as he passed the 90th regiment, Oakfield, grasping the colour he had saved, joined with all his might in the enthusiastic cheering with which, notwithstanding the depression on every heart, at having fought without victory, the brave old general was received by all. Sir Colin Campbell's division, reinforced by another brigade from the right, was formed up at the end of the action, just where the 24th had suffered so severely. Oakfield's regiment was on the very spot. He counted the bodies of nine officers lying dead in as many square yards; there lay the dead bodies of the two Pennycuicks side by side; those of the men almost touched each other. It was originally intended that this division should remain to keep the ground; had this intention been adhered to, it is probable that most of the enemy's captured guns would have been brought in. When, however, the failure of the

cavalry on the right became known, when it was ascertained that however great the loss of the enemy might have been, they were still repulsed certainly, but not defeated, it was determined that the whole army should fall back for the night upon the village of Chillianwalla. So this division began its retreat to join the rest of the force. This march in the dark was, as Oakfield and Stanton (who, it will be remembered, both belonged to this division) afterwards agreed, the longest and most trying part of all the day's proceedings. It was pitch dark, and the jungle was high and strong. None knew exactly what direction to take. The enemy's bugles seemed to be sounding on all sides of them. They moved at a snail's pace, repeatedly sounding a bugle, and waiting for a reply. They saw lights, but were even doubtful whether these denoted their own or the Sikh camp. At last, by a careful feeling of the way and sending men on before, to reconnoitre as best they could under the circumstances, they found that they were in the right direction, and so reached the rest of the army without hindrance. The regiments halted where they came up, blended promiscuously amongst each other. Oakfield reported to his commanding officer the fact of his being in possession of the regimental colour. He was received by Colonel Pringle, who had wit-

nessed the transaction, and was acutely sensible that his corps had been saved so painful a blow as the loss of the colour, graciously — almost cordially; was told that his conduct would certainly be favourably reported, and desired to make over his trust to the native officer next in seniority to the one who had fallen, whose duty it now became to carry it. As Oakfield, after obeying this order joined a group of officers of his own regiment, who were discussing sorrowfully the condition of four of their comrades, of whom one was killed and three more or less seriously wounded, there was heard the sullen report of a heavy gun. All started. Could it be that the enemy meditated a night attack; and if they did, was the British army in a state to resist efficiently? But another and another followed at marked and regular intervals. "Why, confound their impudence!" said Perkins, "if the blackguards are not firing a royal salute!" They counted the guns; — twenty-one were discharged, in regular saluting time, by the Sikhs, in celebration of *their* victory of Chillianwalla!

Oakfield now went to look for Stanton, whom he found, with some difficulty; and the two having shaken hands cordially, sallied out to wander about and gather particulars of the day, and also to pick up, if possible, something to eat and drink. They

walked towards the mound, whereon the lights of the field-hospital, at a distance, looked cheerful, shining through the dark threatening night. But there was little cheerfulness there. The dragoons had galloped right through the hospital, and there were signs everywhere of the havock they had committed. The surgeons were working without a moment's cessation; operations were being performed by the uncertain glare of candles in the open air; doolies, with wounded men in them, were being continually brought in; already those who had died were being thrown carelessly out of the doolie to make room for fresh occupants, soon, perhaps, to follow them. In many doolies two wounded men were lying together. As Stanton and Oakfield arrived, they observed a European soldier with his head bandaged up and his face covered with blood, shouting in an Irish tone, which, amid that scene of horror, strangely and almost ludicrously recalled the land of blarney: "Oh, God! I wish you would take this fellow out; he has been dead these three hours, and I can't stretch my legs for him." The horror of this place, even for those accustomed to surgical operations, and who were kept up by a sense of duty, was almost overpowering; to Stanton and Oakfield it was quite so. They were passing out when a faint yet deep voice caught their ear: "Oakfield!"

Oakfield started; he knew that voice, though he had never yet heard it addressing him in other than angry tones. Turning to the doolie from which the sound proceeded, he saw by the yellow light of a candle that was flaring wildly directly overhead, the countenance, now ghastly white and pinched by the approaching hand of death, of his late adversary, Stafford. He started, and, as he looked at him, shuddered, but his course was clear: "Stanton," he said, disengaging his arm, "you must excuse me a little while; look here."

"I shall stay with you," replied Stanton; and they both sat down on the ground by the side of the dying man.

"Has any doctor been to you yet?" asked Stanton.

"Oh, yes!" he said, in that same death-stricken, yet calm unagitated voice, one came for a minute or so, which was quite enough. They can do nothing for me, I know that."

A violent fit of coughing interrupted him, and the florid bright blood that foamed at his lips showed plainly that the doctors could, indeed, do nothing for him, that he was shot through the lungs. "Water," he gasped faintly. Oakfield went to get him some.

"He musn't speak again," Stanton said to Oakfield; "another attack like that would kill him."

"Don't talk, Stafford," said Oakfield, bending over him; "we will stay here and do anything we can for you."

The smile of the dying man, as he expressed his thanks with a nod, played with an unwonted softness over features fixed by too long habit into an expression of harsh severity. They sat by him for an hour or so, giving him water from time to time. One of the field surgeons came up at once, looked at him, then, turning to Stanton, shook his head, and passed on to a case where his services might be of more avail. Stafford saw what passed, for his eyes were still open though the lids drooped heavily over them. "Ay, ay," he said, "I know it's all up."

"Hush;" said Oakfield, gently; "don't talk."

"Oh, yes! talking can only make a few minutes' difference;" he stopped, exhausted already; then resumed,—and neither Oakfield nor Stanton interrupted him, for he had said the truth; it could make but a few minutes' difference,—"Oakfield, forgive me."

Yes; even at that hour it cost a struggle to that proud man to use the unwonted language of penitence. Merciful struggle! that even at this eleventh hour an opportunity of self-conquest was given; merciful inspiration of the Spirit of God that it was also taken! Oakfield's eyes were full. There is

always something touching in the melting mood of a proud stern man; most awful when it is in the very presence of death; when the infinite evil of pride and good of meekness are not indeed more real than in the noonday of life, but so far more evident. He took Stafford's cold hand in both his own: "God bless you, my dear Stafford, and forgive and comfort you!"

The prayer for comfort was heard. Again the same soft smile shone over that now almost lifeless countenance; he tried to return the pressure of the hand, he tried to speak, when the coughing returned, the red florid blood rushed in a torrent from his mouth, and when the fit was over, life was gone with it. Stafford was dead. The duellist had shown more bravery in his death than ever he had done in his lifetime. Stanton and Oakfield still sat and looked, and were silent. As the latter withdrew his hand from what was now the grasp of a corpse, one of the hospital attendants came up, looked at the body, and said, "By your leave, gentlemen, we want this doolie." The dead body was lifted up with as much delicacy as haste could permit, and placed upon the ground; as they moved it the shirt fell open upon the breast; "Look there," said Stanton, and he pointed to a small blue mark over which the skin had almost entirely closed.

"What! you don't mean that that is a musket shot?" said Oakfield, with the natural surprise of one who had never seen a gunshot wound.

"Ah, yes;" replied the other, "death can enter in by a very narrow entrance."

They replaced the disturbed garment with respectful tenderness, looked once more at the placid features, then rose and walked homeward. It was a dark cold blowing night; the rain fell heavily at intervals. "That is rather different," observed Oakfield, when they had walked some time in silence, "from the last death-bed I witnessed."

"Whose was that?" asked Stanton.

"Arthur Vernon's."

They parted; Stanton betook himself to his troop, Oakfield to his regiment, and slept soundly, wrapped in their cloaks upon the cold wet ground.

CHAP. III.

"Why with such earnest pains dost thou provoke
The years to bring the inevitable yoke,
Thus blindly with thy blessedness at strife?
Full soon thy soul shall have her earthly freight,
And custom lie upon thee with a weight,
Heavy as frost, and deep almost as life!"

WORDSWORTH.

THE next day, and indeed for three days after the battle, it rained heavily. Fortunately the baggage came up, and as there seemed no prospect of an immediate renewal of hostilities, orders were given to mark out an encampment. The 90th marched down to their ground, and there, just as the parade was being dismissed, while the officers were congregated together just after the commandant had left the ground, Perkins stepped forward and said to Oakfield; — "Oakfield! I am desired by my brother officers to express the sincere regret we all feel for the injurious suspicions entertained about you, and to beg your pardon; and," he added in a less formal tone, "I apologize most sincerely for any coldness you may have observed in me since your unlucky trial."

Several officers stept up and shook hands cordially with Oakfield; even Brooks and Straddles were overcome by the regimental feeling, and yielded to it when it veered in this direction as completely as they had done when it set in that diametrically opposite. Oakfield was deeply gratified; he said a few matter-of-course words about his being obliged, glad to have done his duty, and so on; but having no turn for speechifying, and feeling moreover that it would be out of place, he took Perkins's arm and walked with him to his tent, where he spent most of the day, discussing the events of the previous afternoon. That evening a mournful scene took place. All the bodies of the officers who had fallen were interred on the mound. It was a drizzly evening; the sky black with rolling clouds; the bodies sown up in sheets were arranged by the side of several broad deep grave pits. On all sides officers were assembled to look their last upon what may have been once some dear friend. Old Lord Gough was there, the tears rolling down his cheeks, insensible to the storm which beat about his silvery locks.

To this exciting action succeeded another period of inaction. The Sikhs, reinforced by Chutter Singh, suddenly left their position at Russool, and took up their final one at Guzrat, after an abortive attempt to cross the Chenab at Wuzzeerabad,

with the intention, as they arrogantly said, and as was commonly rumoured, of marching direct upon Lahore.

The army under Lord Gough moved to the attack, being reinforced by the whole of the Mooltan force during the 18th, 19th, and 20th of February. The disappointment of Stanton and Oakfield may be imagined, when, on the arrival of the last column from Mooltan, they still did not find Wykham. He had been left behind, suffering from a severe, but happily not dangerous, wound, received in the trenches before Mooltan. The morning of the 21st was a glorious one, different indeed from the lowering sky which heralded in Chillianwalla. Oakfield understood, as he rode along with his regiment and watched the bright sunshine resting on the fields, richly green, and noisy with birds, while as far as the eye could reach, wended along amid this peaceful beauty masses of sparkling steel, variegated with flags, the darker bodies of cavalry, the still gloomier columns of artillery with their ominous rumble in what consisted the delightful excitement of that pomp and circumstance of glorious war, which on former occasions he had looked for, but certainly failed to find.

Almost all felt confident as to the result of the day, and no precaution of steadiness and

patience were omitted on this occasion to justify the wholesome feeling. No sooner did the enemy open his guns upon the advancing army than the line was halted. The Infantry lay down; the Horse Artillery and field-batteries were ordered to the front, and, together with the eighteen monster siege guns brought up from Mooltan, and dragged by elephants, whose huge bodies gave a strange tinge of antiquity and orientalism to the modern and business-like appearance of the magnificently equipped British army, opened a cannonade, which the veteran Commander justly described, with the concurrent testimony of all who were present, as the most magnificent and most terrible in its effects he had ever witnessed. The Sikhs answered it with their usual courage, rapidity, and precision. They were the same race of men, animated by despair, who, at Ferozeshah, at Sobraon, at Chillianwalla, had been cut down at their guns; nor were they unworthy of their previous heroism now. But this cannonade was "beyond the rules." As they afterwards said themselves, "it rained fire." A diminution in their fire was perceptible; instantly the Horse Artillery moved forward, and took up a new and a nearer point of attack. On and on they moved with a cruel cogency, and still the storm of shot waxed more and more furious. The enemy, by a last effort, clung to the most

defensible parts of their position; but the Infantry brigades now coming up to take their share in the conflict, drove them out of these at the point of the bayonet. The huge line wavers, breaks, retires, flies; and the Sikh army is in fact dissolved, the Punjab as good as conquered. The whirlwind charge of the Scinde Horse upon the left, the vigorous pursuit of the Regular and Irregular Cavalry complete the discomfiture. The great pursuer, Sir Walter Gilbert, is despatched with a powerful force in pursuit: Turpin's ride to York is outdone by the march to Peshawur. Such a defeat, followed up by such a pursuit, was more than the broken spirit of the Sikh army could rally against; and the Sikh chiefs, together with an immense number of their followers and guns, were surrendered unconditionally beyond the banks of the Jhelum.

Once more that huge army was assembled; not the whole of it indeed, for the Bombay column, who had so signalised themselves both at Mooltan and Goojerat, returned with their alien laurels to their own place; but it was a powerful and victorious army that was assembled in March, 1849, in that ancient Sikh capital, Lahore. Here Oakfield found poor Wykham, whose wound had healed slowly, and who was looking pale and shattered, very different from

when Oakfield had last seen him the morning he left Simla. He was chagrined, too, beyond expression, at having lost his share in the glories of Goojerat. "I suppose though," he said, "we shall get a medal for Mooltan." Ah, wonderful power of medals! Ah, magic silver mites that can inspire men to do and endure so much, and to think themselves more than rewarded if at last they obtain but thee; power that retains with great tenacity its charm, although those in high places have done their best in these last years to break the spell, and, by thankless indiscriminate distribution of what should be the peculiar and unerring indication of personal, or at least regimental merit, to reduce it to the contemptible level of Cross of the Legion of Honour as it now is.

But while Oakfield sympathised with his friend, others again thought Oakfield himself a fitter subject of anxiety. Wykham had a healthy constitution that nine years and a half of Indian climate had not affected; his wound was already healing; directly he would leave off fretting about Goojerat, he would go to the hills, and get quite well; but Oakfield's frame was not one to stand with impunity the hardships of a campaign, and the night exposure involved by picquet duty. He had escaped the sword of the Sikh to find, as it seemed, a more insidious enemy in

the wet ground of Chillianwalla. That bright complexion seems flashed with a more delicate shade than ever; there is a yellow hue sometimes mixing with the red, which doctors do not like, and old Stanton is painfully startled when he hears that occasional harsh sullen sounding cough.

Oakfield knew that he was ill, but the consciousness could not just now depress him. The campaign left him happier than he had been since he landed in India. He had found his theory stand fire; he had been enabled to carry out in action the plan made in calm reflection; had, in the hour of trial, been master of himself, and "seen what he foresaw;" had found faith in God as veritable a support against the Sikhs upon the banks of the Jhelum, as it had been to his people of old against the host of the Philistines. He had, in fact, proved to his own satisfaction, and of any who chose to consider of it, that a man was none the worse soldier for being a Christian.

"Well, Oakfield," said Stanton, entering the former's tent one morning in the middle of March, where Wykham also was lying on a bed, "they have counter-marched you and me."

"How do you mean?"

"Why, the relief's out, and our troop goes to Ferozepore, and your regiment to Meerut."

"Do we move?" asked Wykham.

"No; all the cavalry corps stands fast; or rather go back to their old quarters."

"Hah! well; it doesn't matter to me much. I mean to take my furlough in the cold weather."

"Do you really?" exclaimed Oakfield; "why how long is it since you came to that intention?"

"Not long; but the doctor was asking this morning when my furlough would be due; and when I told him next July, he advised me to go home by all means in the cold weather; and so I shall if I can manage it."

"Are you going up to Simla in the meanwhile?"

"Yes; six months on medical certificate. After all," he said, with his old smile, which his friend had not seen for a long time, "it's rather lucky this," touching his wounded leg as he spoke, "for I don't suppose I could have got another season out of them on private affairs, and it would never do, you know, to spend the hot winds in the plains. It's all very well for you fellows, but I haven't been a hot weather in the plains, Stanton, for three years."

"Young shirk, shirk!" growled Stanton; and Wykham laughed heartily.

"Oakfield, are you going to Simla?" he asked.

"I,—no: why should I go?"

"Why, you look very seedy. I shall speak to your doctor about you."

"Thank you," said Oakfield; "but I advise you, as a friend, not to."

"Why not?"

"Because you might as well try to coax a bear with a sore head, as to get to windward of old McGrowdy about one of his patients; he'd probably call you an impertinent boy, and turn on his heel, and walk off whistling, to tell somebody how he had snubbed you."

"Confound him," said Wykham, who didn't at all like this description, especially as he saw how Stanton enjoyed it; "I should call him out."

"No good that even; for he wouldn't come."

"Wouldn't he?" began Wykham; then recollecting himself,—"Oakfield, my boy, I was going to commit myself."

"I thought," said Oakfield, "that I had made a convert of you, at Simla."

"Well, upon my honour, I half thought so myself; but you see, when the screw was taken off"—

"I being the screw?" interrupted Oakfield, "well, if I do go to Simla, I shall come and live with you, and then we'll apply it again."

"Well, you shall live with me, Oakfield; because, you see I shall want somebody to share the house; in consideration of which, I will even risk another such sermon as that I got once behind Jacko."

"Ah, master Fred, there's not much the matter with you, I see; when you're as impudent as that you are in a good way to be off the sick list."

"Not till my sick certificate is signed, you may take your oath," said Wykham.

"Well, Oakfield," said Stanton, "if you and Wykham have done chaffing, I vote we go over and see Jenkyns: I've hardly spoken to him once since Guzrat: — Wykham seems getting all right," he continued, as they left the tent; "but I declare, Oakfield, I think he was right about you."

"What about me?"

"That you ought to go to the hills."

"Well," said Oakfield, "I dare say he was I am not well, I know; old Mc Growdy was asking me a day or two ago, if I didn't dread the heat, which was a great advance for him to make. I think he'd give me a certificate."

"Take it then, my good fellow, by all means; and then come down from Simla in the cold weather, and join your appointment."

"What appointment?"

"Oh, they are certain to give you something, now that you have passed in both languages; and after saving the colour the other day."

"I don't feel confident, I must say, of their offering; nor if they do, of my" — he stopped.

"Well?" said Stanton.

"Why, I know you'll be in a rage when I say it—of my accepting."

"Nay," said Stanton, "I don't see what there is in that to put me in a rage."

"I thought you'd call it paradoxical; an affectation of singularity, and all that; and yet, on second thoughts, you ought not to, for you have done the same thing yourself; you never applied for an appointment, I fancy, and that alone is rather singular."

"I never applied, because I knew I should never get one, and I am not so fond of the mere process of asking a favour, as to go through it for the sake of getting a civil refusal, in a public letter; but still I allow I do share your heresy upon this, more than most other points. For a man who is not pecuniarily straitened, and has plenty of work made for himself, a mere drudgery appointment is not to be snatched at merely because Smith, Jones, and Robinson, think it is a tremendous piece of luck, and so on: yet, I should be sorry, Oakfield, if you were to make up your mind to lead the life which I have led, and now shall always lead."

"Why?"

"Why I am not sure it is at all the best thing for a man; there are few people, I think, so capable of standing it as I am (you know I'm not a

conceited fool, so I shall not take up five minutes in every sentence in would-be-modest circumventions), and for one who cannot stand it, it is wretchedly injurious. Depend upon it, there is a difficulty in sticking perseveringly to work made for yourself, which you ought to scruple before encountering as your position for life; there is an assistance to the whole character in compulsory work, even the commonest routine drudgery, which you should consider well before you venture to abandon."

"Well," said Oakfield, "I allow that; but if I weigh myself, and come to the conclusion that I *can* both sustain the difficulties and dispense with the help, what then?"

"Why, then, I grant you, you have a right to make a free choice; only, still I would ask you whether you are quite certain that your choice would be rightly made, in preferring your own work to that which *some* appointments might hold out to you. I fully agree with you that an appointment which involves a great deal of occupation and but little work, which would, in fact, oblige you to spend the greater part of your time in accounts, or copying, or other such like clerk-work, leaves little or no question; every man is justified in deciding for himself whether or not so much extra money a month will compensate

him for what he will consider waste of time; and if he decides in the negative, I for one shall think him not foolish but wise; but there are other appointments, Oakfield, where the work is really such as a man may well devote himself to; I never can think civil employ, for instance, to be sneered at."

"Of course not sneered at; why sneer at anything which men think fit to do? It is that sneering at occupations and callings which we ourselves do not affect, that causes so much mischief. People do not choose a path in life for themselves, but follow that which their neighbours declare to be the best. I do believe there is more real intolerance on this matter of a profession than on any other subject in the world; I do not sneer at the calling of a billiard-marker; why should I at civil employ? But I think one is bound to examine the latter as rigidly as the former; not to take the excellence of one for granted any more than that of the other."

"Well, but what do you mean by examining? Examine what?"

"Examine what there is in any line of life which seems to open itself, that may assist or retard the great object of life."

"Which is"—

"One's own spiritual life."

"Yes," said Stanton, after a pause, "I allow

that; our own, because such selfishness involves, in fact, the highest self-abandonment. Go on."

"How shall I go on? I say this civil employ you were talking of is good or bad to me, desirable or the reverse, according as it could help to develop that in me which requires developing, and repress that which wants repressing. I believe in several ways I should find it helpful; that the regular hard work would be good for my indolence, and its practical activity a healthy counterpoise to those theorising tendencies you often speak of; then on the other hand, I should have, you see, to give up that literary mode of life which you have pursued with such success, which you feel has been a better 'appointment' for you than any the government could have given you, and which, as I believe I should like it best, so I have been always willing to hope would suit me best; though I am doubtful, I own, doubtful of my own power of overcoming indolence, without some external force to assist me."

"You are right, I am sure; It *is* an awful tug, I know, to me, going on month after month and day after day working as regularly as if the terrors of *wigging* overhung indolence, instead of conscience reproof merely; the law is as binding, I know, a good deal more so, but infinitely harder to obey."

"But if obeyed," continued Oakfield, "nothing strengthens the character so much; it is the very perfection of obedience in a good sense, the most complete opponent of Jacobinism and lawlessness; so that it is the best thing, you see, for those who are equal to it; and it cannot be without reluctance that we judge ourselves unequal; turn away from the best and follow the second best; besides, there is another danger in external laws; it is easier to obey them, but it is also easy to depend upon them, which is emasculating and wrong; they may make work easier, but they also tempt us to devote ourselves to it."

"Do you speak of that as a temptation? A man worth his salt would wish, I should think, to devote himself to any calling he enters upon; a clergyman devotes himself to his preaching and visiting, and you praise him; you call him a good officer in this country who, like Middleton, gives himself up entirely to his magisterial duties."

"And yet, Stanton, I think one of the things which you and I both so like and admire in Middleton is that he does *not* 'give himself up' to his work. I do *not* praise that man, clergyman or what else, who 'gives himself up' to his work; I should desire to enter myself upon civil employ, or any other employ, with the deliberate intention of not 'devoting' myself to it; an intention, I fancy, hard to keep."

"Oh, now you get to paradox, again!" said Stanton, impatiently.

"If you mean by paradox finding fallacies in common phrases and notions, I hope I am paradoxical; though I know I am not so much so as you, who have long lived in practical rejection of common notions, acting paradox for the last twelve years. What I said, I believe,—and so do you, I dare say, if you think of it; and don't start off and toss your old mane directly you fancy you catch me tripping."

"My dear Oakfield, I will not be preached out of common sense."

"Yes, but you ought to be, by that which is higher than common sense; the common sense is insufficient where nice discrimination is required."

"Do you really mean to contend that an honest man, voluntarily entering upon any profession or business, is not bound to do his best in it?"

"I contend for nothing of the sort, and your common sense ought to have saved you from uttering such a common-place; what you have said now is just as true, and just as original, as if you had said 'an honest man ought not to steal.'"

"I ought to be angry at your cool impertinence, young man," said Stanton, smiling, however, amicably.

"Not you; but what I said was a very different thing; that a man should not devote himself to his work. To do his work to the best of his ability, to put all his energy into it, is, of course, an obvious duty: to 'devote himself' to it is a sin."

"I see what you mean: but you are at your old game: the distinction is too fine, of no practical value."

"Of as much value," rejoined Oakfield, "as any of the nice distinctions between the border shades of right and wrong, which go to make up the diagnosis of morals: nay, of greater importance: for a man who devotes or gives himself up to any work, to anything, to any name save One, in earth or heaven, is an idolater. His work, be it what it may, is still but an appendage, a circumstance, not of the first importance to him, but at highest the second: he may not give it the first place. That belongs, not to his work any more than to his coat, but to him; not to the appurtenances of the man, even the highest and noblest of them, but to the man. He may devote himself to God, devote himself to spiritual life: it is not profane nor selfish, but in the correct meaning of the words true, to say he may devote himself to himself, but not to his circumstances."

"A needless caution to nine men out of ten."

"I rather think not; but even so, needful for the tenth: and if I think myself the tenth for whom it is needful, what difference does it make to me that nine others want another, an opposite truth? Let them take it in God's name; but not presume to quarrel with me (nor I with them) for choosing mine. But it is a more common evil, I suspect, especially among very busy men, than you seem to think."

"It is at any rate a nobler vice than mere animal idleness, and a rarer."

"Yes, a nobler kind of selfish idolatry; but at best never noble, nor anything but base. The animal-indulging, idle man worships, 'devotes himself' to his belly, his dinner, his horse-racing, and neglects himself — his soul, which decays. The busy man devotes himself to his office, his 'cases,' his appeals, — a nobler vice you say: be it so: at any rate it sounds better; the language of one man's idolatry is revolting to us, the other commands our respect; but the result is much the same in both: the accidents of the man lives, the essence dies; the soul can be smothered in a law-suit as effectually as in a beer tankard; and fifty years hence the former, as well as the latter, will be gone, and the two men left equally bare, equally dead, equally unprofitable."

"You should have been a padré, Ned. Wykham might well talk of your preaching."

"I may allow Wykham to talk of it, but not you," answered Oakfield, laughing. "I dare say I do preach to Wykham, or did once: I converse with you; that is I would, if you were not crusty. If it is a padré's business only to exalt the soul, then I allow I ought to have been a padré, and so ought you; and indeed all but padrés must be in a bad way. I will, by your leave, call myself a padré henceforth. Ah! my dear Stanton, what padré shall deliver my soul, or make agreement unto God for it? Have I not a life, a being, ever struggling for the birth, ever driven back by sin, by form, by conventionalities of my own or others' making; and shall I ignore all this because I wear a red coat instead of a black one? No," he added, seeing that Stanton was about to interrupt, "I know that you were only in joke, and didn't mean that: but"—

"But what?"

"But God deliver us from all forms! I could say now, I will never listen to or act a part in a lie again. I will never go to a church where God is not worshipped, never mix in a society where only the animal life is acknowledged, never even speak with respect of what does not approve itself to me as good, be it priest, or altar, or sacrament, or whatever man calls most sacred; but I will worship God under the stars, and call good good,

and evil evil, the liberal liberal, and the churl churl, the wise man wise, and the fool foolish."

"The fit will pass," said Stanton, "and you will find that till you can ignore time and space, and mortality, you must even accommodate yourself to their imposed necessities and imperfections."

"I know it," he said, sadly, "the fit will pass; it is even now passing. God knows there is no fear of our intuitions lasting too long: it has passed, and I am the less happy; the more prudent and perhaps the less wise. I see that dust-storm coming up, which will make us uncomfortable, and then cool us; and I acknowledge that we are in a composite world. I remember that I have once or twice this morning spoken harshly or violently, and I acknowledge the same thing; and come down to the old conclusion, from which the soul, in what you call its fits, will now and then try to escape, but is forced back again by matter of fact merciless nature, that we must take the evil with the good, that we can no more affirm perfect truth than we can do it. All true, Sir. The fit is over, and I shall go to mess to-night, and to church to-morrow, and jog on in an orthodox fashion again till the next fit, trying to patch up irreconcileable differences as best I can; Oh! doubtless I shall be very wise."

He spoke ironically, almost bitterly. Stanton

knew what he felt, what he suffered; he too had felt the same. What young man does not feel the same at some time or other of his career; when he is tempted (Oh! shall we say by his good or evil genius?) to effect for himself an entire revolution, to stand on his own ground, and not another's; to go wherever his belief leads him in full trust? and then there is the painful self-reproaching sinking back again into the strong grasp of form and fashion; there are the last clinging glances to the Eastern sun, as the man now yielding to the force of the actual, beholds the last glimpses of the real—

> " to die away,
> And fade into the light of common day —"

and so, as Stanton said himself, with a half unconscious bitterness, " the fit passes," and the sobriety of respectability and orthodoxy succeeds. " And so," resumed Stanton, " what is the upshot of all this? Do you intend to take your appointment? "

" I must admire the delicious gravity with which we have first assumed our castle, and then disputed as to whether or no we will take possession: why as to my appointment which is in the clouds, I will postpone the decision till it comes down to earth, and then I say I shall have plenty of time to consider of it. I think I probably should; for I be-

lieve indolence would be a greater snare to me than idolatry."

"To descend to sublunary matters," said Stanton, "the pay is a consideration."

"Well, I can't allow that even; I manage to live well enough."

"But you will marry some day, and then you won't be able to manage on 'Ensign's pay?'"

"I don't expect to be an Ensign all my life; but at any rate I can't understand to provide for a future, and very vague contingency."

"Do you say you live well enough at present, Oakfield? Are you out of debt?"

"I am no more in debt than the batta,* if we get it, will amply clear. I never was before the campaign."

"You don't assent to the common cry just now that Ensigns cannot live upon their pay?"

"Why you know, Stanton, by your own account the fact of its being a common cry is sufficient to make me mistrust it; but really there seems to me to be something in it almost shocking."

"Well, I agree with you entirely. I do despise that cant most heartily; – the very idea of asking whether an Ensign *can* live on his pay, when there are some scores who *do*. Why if one did, it would be proof positive that it *could* be done."

* *Batta*, the donation generally given, of late years, to the Indian armies after a campaign.

"Exactly," said Oakfield, "that is the folly of it; and besides the folly, I really do think that there is something fearful in asking whether a man (a soldier too) can live on 200*l.* a year; it always sounds like insolence to the thousands of good honest men who live on twenty; like cruelty to the tens of thousands who live on less than ten."

"Very true," said Stanton, "the Ensign would tell you, however, that he had his position as a gentleman to keep up."

"Yes, I suppose he would."

"Well, and what should you say to him?"

"Why, I think if I condescended to say anything in answer to such melancholy folly, I should ask him how much gentlemanliness cost, how cheap one could do it, what was the price of the very best article, and so on."

"Good," said Stanton, "I am glad that we have found one subject on which we can declaim conjointly and in peace. How far do you carry your socialism, Oakfield?"

Oakfield started. "Socialism! oh yes—how far do I carry it? Why I suppose as far as one has occasion for it. It is like every truth, I suppose, infinite."

"Surely you think the Parisian socialists carry it too far?"

"I am scandalously ignorant, I am sorry to say, about Paris and Parisians, but as the Parisians,

socialists or other, are, I presume, only mortal men, I will undertake to say most confidently that they have carried no truth too far; they cannot go further than finity, and as aforesaid, all truth is infinite."

"Well, but what have murder and rapine to do with truth?"

"Just nothing; and so it is, people call that which has nothing to do with a truth a too great extension of it. No, depend upon it, your Paris friends are not too true in their socialism, though possibly terribly unbalanced."

"What do you mean?"

"I mean that you may walk along the truth of socialism, and the further you walk the truer it is; but it has an antipodes, a polar truth on the other side, and if you quite neglect that side, and put all your weight on this, the see-saw is spoiled, and down you go."

"Is all truth, then, a see-saw?"

"Not in itself, I dare say, not as it is, not as God sees it; but practically it so accommodates itself to our view;—but Stanton, I am tired to death of talking, and here we have been sitting in your tent for the last hour, when we ought to have been going to call on Jenkyns."

"By Jove," rejoined Stanton, "so we ought, I forgot all about it."

CHAP. IV.

"It is not to taste sweet things, but to do noble and true things, and vindicate himself under God's heaven as a God-made man, that the poorest son of Adam dimly longs. Show him the way of doing that, the dullest day-drudge kindles into a hero. They wrong him greatly who say he is to be seduced by ease. Difficulty, abnegation, martyrdom, death, are the *allurements* that act on the heart of man. Kindle the inner genial life of him, you have a flame that burns up all lower considerations; not happiness but something higher. One sees this even in the frivolous classes, with their 'point of honour,' and the like."

CARLYLE.

THE army at Lahore broke up a few days after the above conversation, and the regiments returned to their different cantonments. Stanton's troop, it will be remembered, was to be quartered at Ferozepore, and the 90th regiment at Meerut; Oakfield, however, applied for and obtained a month's leave to stay with the Middletons; indeed his health was becoming so much worse, as the heat increased, that he would have been unable to stand the prolonged march. Miss Middleton was still at Allahabad, but expected to return soon; they were both received by her brother with hearty hospitality.

"Welcome to the two warriors!" he exclaimed as Oakfield and Stanton rode up from where their camp was pitched; — and he shook each of them by the hand with a heartiness that testified to the depth of the emotion which was concealed under a playful manner. Coming off their march, not having been in a house for some four or five months, the two campaigners were able fully to appreciate the comfort of the cool, large, matted, dust-tight rooms, the purifying, refreshing bath, the luxury of iced water, and light yet substantial breakfast, to which they presently sat down. They talked of the campaign of course; — men who had served were seldom allowed to talk of anything else for the next six months; — Mr. Middleton was severe, as almost all sensible men were, upon Chillianwalla.

"It is provoking," he said, "that big people should still be allowed to go on telling lies to each other when everybody knows that they *are* lies. I am certain that it never can be wise policy to tell a lie which is sure to be found out. What can be the good of calling Chillianwalla a glorious victory, when everybody in the country knows it was almost a defeat?"

"No, no," said Stanton, "it was no defeat, nothing like it; we had rather the best of it of the two. I grant you it would have been called a vic-

tory just the same if it had been a defeat; as Ferozeshah was, where I grant you we were thoroughly and entirely beaten. But it was quite different at the Jhelum, we should have beaten them thoroughly had we had an hour's more daylight."

"Whose fault was it that there was not an hour's more daylight?"

"Ah! there I grant you; fighting at three o'clock in the afternoon was a sad mistake."

"But," said Oakfield, "could it be helped? They were firing, recollect, right into the ground where we were going to encamp."

"Well, but where was the necessity for encamping just within range of the enemy's batteries? that was the blunder; and then the notion of a British general talking of his Irish blood."

"What, is that really a true story?" said Mr. Middleton: "is it possible? Just fancy the Duke of Wellington, whom the Irish are always claiming as a countryman, though I suppose he is in every respect the very most un-Irish, and even anti-Irish man, in his constitution and temper, that ever lived, just fancy his telling his soldiers in the Peninsula that he fought a battle because his Irish blood couldn't stand the insult of a stray shot."

"Well," interposed Oakfield, who had a vivid recollection of Lord Gough as he rode up to the

90th on the evening of the action, and as he appeared at the funeral the day after; "he is a grand old fellow, notwithstanding."

"So he is," said Stanton, heartily; "and if he was a little hasty at Chillianwalla he couldn't have made a better business than he did of Guzrat."

"True; and even at Chillianwalla, I shall always think he had not a fair chance; he couldn't calculate upon the 24th being taken up to the charge from an unheard of distance, and, as some people say, unloaded."

"Is it possible?" said Mr. Middleton; "neither," he added, "could he have calculated upon the false movements of the Cavalry on the right."

"Humph!" ejaculated Stanton, "the less said about that the better."

"I don't see that," exclaimed Oakfield; "I declare I think there has been a great deal of misplaced generosity in this matter. Depend upon it it is not returned. The wretched natives don't get off so easily."

"I must say I agree with Oakfield," said Mr. Middleton; "not that I think the native soldiers have much reason to complain of the way in which their services are acknowledged."

"No," said Oakfield, "perhaps not."

"I should rather think not," said Stanton, in

his turn warming; "on the contrary, I think the way in which the Sepoys are belauded and bebuttered, and bebattaed after a campaign, as if their fighting—in other words doing what they are paid for—was the most wonderful thing in the world, is the grossest as well as the most impolitic thing in the world."

They all agreed that this was true.

"But the fact is," added Stanton, "we are all of us a great deal too fond of buttering each other on these occasions. It is the tendency of the age to try and make things easy, to get honour and glory cheap, without suffering for them, hence that wretched system of squandering medals and C. B.-ships after a campaign, with such absurd indiscriminating profusion that they are hardly worth the having."

"But how can you discriminate?" asked Mr. Middleton, "you must give them to all who were present."

"Present where?" cried Stanton, "present under fire, and I agree with you, but men get them now-a-days who are in as great security all the time as if they were a thousand miles off. Surely they might limit the distribution to those who were actually engaged. I believe the army would thank them to do so. No officer likes to wear a medal which he feels he has not earned. I know in my

own case, I would as soon think of wearing the Waterloo medal, as that for Maharajpore."

"Were you present at Maharajpore?"

"I was with the army, but saw no more of the action than you did. I was on duty at the time in camp. I had no right to the medal, whereas that for the Sutlej, and for this last business, if we get it, I am and shall be as proud of as you could wish."

"That distinction would be rather hard, would it not," suggested Mr. Middleton, "on those who by no fault of theirs are absent, yet belong to the army?"

"I don't see that it is hard. It is very unlucky of course for the man whose roster for any detached duty comes round on the day of a general action; and anybody of military spirit will deeply regret the bad fortune which keeps him out of the field; will accept his inglorious duty as a hard and unpleasant one, but still a duty; and the man who regrets being unable to enter the field will be the first to refuse to be decorated as though he had been there. It is no fault of the regiments down at Barrackpore that they were not at Chillianwalla, but we should think it rather odd if they claimed the medal. In the same way it was no fault, but a great misfortune, for which I pity them sincerely, of the men who were in the rear guarding

the baggage; but it would be, or rather it will be, unjust to decorate them with the same badge of honour for walking alongside a camel, as they do Oakfield for saving a colour."

"What was that? what was that?" said Mr. Middleton, "why did you never mention it? I never heard a word about it."

"Did you not?" said Stanton, "of course not, though, for Oakfield was, I believe, your only correspondent, and I know you were not likely to hear it from him."

He looked kindly at his friend as he spoke, and with an honourable pleasure told the story. Mr. Middleton looked much pleased. "This is delightful," he said, "the very most desirable epilogue to your court martial, my dear boy."

"Just what I told him," said Stanton, "but his court martial had another epilogue besides that;" — and he related the account of Stafford's death, which made them all silent for some time.

"What were we talking about?" Stanton presently resumed, "Oh! medals! — well, I was going to say that people abuse the old Duke now-a-days, for being, as they say, stingy, and ungracious about medals; for my part I think it is just like the man, that is to say, wise and admirable. He knows exactly what an action is, few men better; and knows, therefore, that to give medals promiscuously

to all who were present, is to give them very undeservedly in some cases, and very much diminished in value in others; and knowing this, I do love the profound indifference with which the grand old man listens to the foolish ravings of thousands of people, who, as he is perfectly well aware, know just exactly nothing about the matter."

"I like to hear you speak like that of the Duke," said Mr. Middleton, "an Englishman, and especially an officer, presuming, as so many do now-a-days, to affect to speak deprecatingly and disrespectfully of him, is to me one of the most offensive things I know."

"I think so too," said Oakfield, "he is a very obelisk of a man in these latter days, a giant among pigmies, one of the few eminent signs left to show what an unconquerable will, an entire-hearted man can do."

"I am half inclined to agree with you, Stanton," said Mr. Middleton, "about medals, but I confess I have thought more about that which is now-a-days the usual concomitant of medals: I mean batta; — and I consider the principle on which that is granted most thoroughly detestable."

"Well, but what do you suppose *is* the principle?"

"I know," answered Mr. Middleton, "that it professes not to be a remuneration for fighting, but a compensation for camp expenses; in wise adaptation to which theory a very large sum is given to those who can best afford to defray those expenses, and *vice versâ*. But I appeal to your considerable experience, whether you have ever found your campaigns so expensive, that without batta they would have greatly involved you?"

"No, certainly not; oh! I quite agree with you, and even if they had, I should think batta false in principle. The notion of the State paying the expenses of individuals as well as its own is monstrous. I believe Cabul was an exceptional case; and as government, in a foolish war, brought an army for no purpose into a country where all things were at starvation prices, it was perhaps just that they should pay for their folly. But I admit that batta, on its present, and now it seems habitual footing, is low, unchivalrous, and worthy of a people of shopkeepers. To degrade war to such a very mercenary level is also, I fear, as Oakfield would say, symptomatic of the age."

"I think so, certainly," said Oakfield; "fancy England or France or any of the great powers in the last war, taking upon them, in addition to their other burdens, to give six months' batta to their armies!"

Breakfast over, Mr. Middleton went to his court, where he was occupied till five in the evening. To Stanton and Oakfield it was a great lounge, after a long camp life, to lie on a sofa again, with the range of (for India) a very good library. At five o'clock Mr. Middleton came in, and found both his friends asleep on their respective couches. They formed a strange contrast. Stanton's rough brown hair and moustache and *beard*, upon which, according to a prevailing fashion of the army, he had suffered no razor to come since the commencement of the campaign, partly concealed, but could not altogether disguise, the strong lines of his quiescent face. In that calm square forehead, those features which, though so rough, look as if cut in stone, so unmoved are they, especially the firm lines of his mouth, one of those mouths for which nature has, in the first place, done enough, and then as it were left it to the man himself whether it shall be good or bad, whether those thick lips shall droop into sensual hideousness, or be gathered up into the solidity of strength; his face altogether indicates much self-conquest; it is the countenance of a man who, though young in years, has passed the crisis of life and settled down into the comparative serenity of self-knowledge, self-reliance, self-subjugation; — but Mr. Middleton found his gaze fixed more and longer

on Oakfield. If in the other physiognomy there was more matter for congratulation, perhaps — in its placid strength —for admiration, yet this more called for sympathy. Not only for the appearance of ill health, though that is sadly visible ; the sunk face, so grave, yet so clear ; the hollow eye ; the shrunk form ; the painful breathing ; these symptoms startled and shocked Mr. Middleton, who had not observed them when the features were lighted up with animation, as they had been in the morning. But there was more than the signs of ill health to sympathise with. If in Stanton's face the traces of conflict past were visible, here might be seen those of conflict present. The delicacy of skin seemed to indicate a corresponding delicacy within that shrank continually from the battle which duty still rendered necessary. There is a look of anxiety, of restlessness, that seems to speak of a perpetual jarring within of discordant elements, of a painful struggle between strength and weakness, which seems to say that poor Oakfield has not found peace yet, any more than when he talked to Margaret on Dunmail Raise.

Mr. Middleton stood still at the entrance of the room, making these observations. He would not disturb them, so proceeded to take a book, intending to read till one of them chose to wake. He

was not so quiet, however, in moving across the room, but that Stanton, with the quick ear of an old soldier recently exercised, heard him, and started up.

"Hallo, Middleton, is that you? By Jove! I think I have been asleep."

"I think you have."

"How long have you been here? Why didn't you wake me?"

"I have only just come in: but I didn't intend to wake you. I thought very likely you might have arrears of sleep to work off: but don't let us talk loud, for poor Oakfield there doesn't seem inclined to wake. Don't you think, Stanton," he added, dropping his voice, "he looks very ill?"

"I do really; I was quite uneasy about him at Lahore the other day; he ought to go to the hills directly."

"He'll have to go to England, I suspect, before he has done. The sea is the only thing that ever thoroughly drives that colour out of a man's cheeks. Well, which of you, gentlemen, am I to drive to-night? We can't all three go in the buggy."

"Oh! drive Oakfield, then: I shan't go out: or you can lend me a horse."

"I can very easily do that."

So it was arranged. In about an hour's time, a little before sunset, Oakfield woke up, with much

the same shrewd observation which Stanton had made; and which, indeed, most people make, who go to sleep in the day-time, as a kind of apology to themselves, for having been guilty of such an impropriety; just in time to bathe, dress, and go out on the course with Mr. Middleton. It was curious to Oakfield being back on the Ferozepore course, after a six months' interval, which seemed like years. How much had happened in those six months! His journey to Simla and back, and all the excitement of the campaign, which had of itself been such a completely strange and new chapter in his life; his court-martial seemed to belong to a past age. As he was thus musing, Stanton rode up alongside: "I say, Oakfield, wasn't it on this road you had your adventure with the great Straddles?"

"Yes, just by the tree there, about a hundred yards a-head. Poor Straddles! I don't like to think of that business; he was a great fool, to be sure."

"Preserve me from my commiserators," said Mr. Middleton, laughing.

"No, no; I didn't mean to say that, either; upon my word, I am very sorry when I think of poor Straddles, and poor Stafford, too!"

His countenance fell. Ferozepore and his encounter on the very spot which they were now

driving over, recalled associations that ill agreed with his last impressions of Stafford.

"Don't talk any more about that business," he said, lying back in the buggy, "it was a bad one at best, and I would rather forget it."

"Well, I quite understand your feeling on the subject," said Mr. Middleton; "don't you, Stanton?"

"Humph," replied that gruff gentleman, with his favourite prefatory ejaculation, "well, perhaps I do;" and galloped off.

"Stanton hates any allusion to feelings," observed Oakfield; "well, it is a wise antipathy."

"He will respect yours, though, you may depend upon it," said Mr. Middleton.

"Oh, I know that; I know he will never open his lips on the subject again. Good old fellow! Now, if I was in his place, I should make ten resolutions to his one, and,—not through unkindness but infirmity,—keep them about a tenth part as well. He is one of the few men I know whose resolution is as good as his performance; one is so perfectly certain to follow the other."

"Very true; but he has reached that state through a severe discipline, you may be sure. I like to watch him now; his seat on his horse has a characteristic force in it. I am convinced the animal must feel a magnetic consciousness that Stanton intends to be master, and will certainly

be so, under all circumstances. Hah! is not that Perkins, of your regiment, on the grey horse?"

"Yes, to be sure. Well, Perkins, good evening; do you march to-morrow?"

"Oh, no; halt here a couple of days more. How do you do, Mr. Middleton, glad to see you again."

The usual civilities passed between them, and Mr. Middleton asked him to dinner. Perkins would have been most happy, but unfortunately he was the officer of the day. He would, however, gallop back to camp, and if he could get another officer to take his duty for him, would come up to dinner; so off he went.

"Great good in that man, too," said Mr. Middleton, looking after him, "though in a sufficiently different style from Stanton."

"Great good in all men, I begin to think," answered Oakfield.

"Why, that is rather a new line for you to come out in, Oakfield; you used rather to lament the universal delinquency."

"And might still, for we are all fearful delinquents, but the campaign taught me, amongst other things, and I am thankful to it for the lesson, to be more catholic-minded. I was quite surprised with the good (in many different styles, as you say) which a little hardship and work drew

out of men whom I own I had always thought good for nothing."

"I can well believe it; it is a good lesson; believe it, I advise you, when tempted, as you will be, to forget or deny it. To a thoughtful man, the enormous evil in the world is so patent that it is superfluous to dwell on it; the good which is better worth knowing is latent, and in many cases, it must be owned, cruelly hard to find.

They drove home, and in about half-an-hour were joined by Stanton and Perkins, who had effected an amiable compromise regarding the night picquets with the Adjutant. They had a pleasant evening.

The month of April in that part of India is very bearable, and in a well arranged house very comfortable. The doors had been hermetically sealed all the day, and when the sun was down, and they were thrown open to the fresh air, not yet irremediably baked through by the long day's sunshine as in May and June, the house was so cool that a punkah was not required.

The glass and silver glittered pleasantly in the lamp-light on the snow-white table-cloth; the dinner was—to men accustomed to campaign fare—luxurious, and Perkins was justified in assuring his friends at mess the next evening, that "old Middleton had a very good idea of making himself

comfortable;—the dinner was good, and the iced simkin,* Sir, delicious." Perkins talked away in his own amusing, self-confident, free and easy style, dilated on the campaign of course, had a tolerable store of anecdotes connected with it, complained bitterly of the 90th not having been sent with the pursuing force, and indeed any soldier might well regret having missed that glorious and exciting expedition.

In three days the regiment marched. Oakfield remained behind; not to remain long however, for the very day before his corps left he appeared before a medical committee, upon the recommendation of his crusty but skilful friend McGrowdy, and received a sick certificate to Simla till 1st November, 1849. The sun was getting hotter every day, and he felt it becoming more and more injurious to him, so he left Ferozepore without delay, on the 20th April, to travel by dawk to Simla. He had no such unpleasant rainy adventures as had marked his last journey in September; the only event, if it may be so called, was his passing, near Loodiana, the train of waggons with the wounded men, European and Native, of the late battles, journeying slowly, march by march, towards the invalid depôt at

* *Simkin*—*quasi* Hindustanee for champagne.

Landour. It was a ghastly sight, those squalid faces and thin bodies; some were evidently suffering excruciating pain from the jolting of these rough vehicles; the effects of war, with the excitement off and the chill on, are an awful spectacle; — "Poor fellows," thought Oakfield, as he looked at them, "I doubt very much whether you individually get your fair share of the honour and glory in these affairs, at all equivalent to your share of the pains and perils;" with which radical cogitation he passed sadly on, musing upon the Peace Society then just beginning to agitate in England, but not even the carts he had just seen could reconcile him to their doctrines. "So long," thought he, "as there are worse evils in the world than gunshot and bayonet wounds, universal peace is a doctrine not to be preached without qualification. I have just seen some of the physical evils of war, but I must not forget its moral good effects, which I as certainly witnessed in the case of the officers of the 90th."

He reached Simla better than he had expected, though exhausted by the journey. He found Wykham in his old house, and went and took up his quarters with him as before. Wykham was quite recovered, but still adhering to his resolution of taking his furlough in the cold weather.

It may be fancied what a theme of conversation this was to them, though rather a sad one to poor Oakfield, who, however, still found a fascination in it, and almost tired Wykham by constantly recurring to it. Wykham lived in London; his friends, he said, were living in the same street, in the same house, that they had done ever since he could remember. Except that two sisters had been born during his absence, whose acquaintance he had yet to make, his family circle remained exactly as it had been when he left, so that his prospects in returning to England were really happy; so happy that Oakfield with his nervous distrust of Nemesis, wondered he could contemplate, or at least speak of them, without trembling. He was much struck by the increased gravity of Wykham's manner. There was the same joyous cheerfulness, which sat on him even more gracefully that it seemed now to play lightly over a ground of more becoming and restful gravity. His wound and illness, perhaps too his previous intercourse with Oakfield, had made him think; with all his lightsomeness undiminished, he appeared to have a more distinct consciousness of the solemnity of life. Oakfield saw, or at least felt, this change, and found himself more closely drawn than ever to his friend. He remarked upon it in his letters to Stanton, but got, what he

half expected, a *quasi* reproof in that quarter. "If you make Wykham as grave as yourself," wrote this uncourteous correspondent, "you will spoil a very good fellow; – sweets to the sweet, gravity to the grave, frolic to the frolicsome." Oakfield wrote back a protest, in which he expressed himself better: "Wykham is not spoilt, but much improved: he is graver than he was; still frolicsome but serious: and I will not think any human being the worse, but much the better, for having a broad foundation of seriousness, which the lightest spirits may gracefully illuminate. Playfulness on the top of the seriousness, is not only a charm to others, but it is the wise secret of life. Without this it is mere folly and grimacing; graceful in a boy as in a kitten; but intolerable in a man. Wykham has been a playfully graceful boy; he is now a wisely sportive man."

To this Stanton assented.

"Do you look forward much to going home yourself, Oakfield?" Wykham asked one evening, in the course of the ride.

"Does a cat like milk? You must be mocking my misfortune; fancy not looking forward to it!"

"Well, I never did, till quite lately; till in fact I was advised to go. I used to say to myself I should probably go home some day, but never

dwelt upon it, or built castles, as many men do; it always seemed so distant."

"I should be very sorry," said Oakfield, "not to dwell upon it, and build castles; sorry to lose the softening influence of a prospect so made up of pleasure and pain. I often observe that the best men in this country are those who like it least."

"I shouldn't have thought it did any man much good to hate the country he has to live in."

"Why not? There is a strict analogy in the highest sense of goodness. The good man is he who loves earth the least, and has the greatest desire to leave it."

"Why, after all," said Wykham, "it doesn't much matter to you and me, because we have nothing to do, and so it is of no importance whether we like it or not; but a man who has hard work to do, surely does it better for liking the country he has to do it in."

"That sounds true, Wykham, but really I believe you will find that practically it is not the case. Besides, my analogy is against you still, and I think it is a fair one. Few men worked more vigorously in their day than Paul; yet who so much longed to depart and be with Christ, which was far better? So in a very much lower but strictly analogous sense, men out here may even

be desirous to depart and be with those they love best on earth, and yet work none the less vigorously, but the more so, so long as it is profitable for them to remain: their vigour is not lessened by this home longing, at least it certainly need not be; and on the other hand, in this country, where the affections are too apt to grow cold, nothing is so softening, so calculated to keep them alive. Besides, why waste time in finding reasons to justify our natural affections? their existence is their justification: look too at individual cases,—at Middleton."

"Middleton! you don't mean to say he is troubled with home longings? I should have thought he cared for nothing but cutcherry."

"Then you never formed a more erroneous opinion of a man in your life. Since his sister has come out, he has said less, and I dare say felt less on the subject, but I know he still looks forward to going home as the great event of his life."

"Going home for good?"

"No: Middleton would not do that as long as his health lasts. There again he would feel bound to give his service to the country so long as he could usefully and profitably do so."

"I don't see how he is *bound* to stay after serving his time."

"Not bound, of course, legally; but Middleton

is too good a man to view his duty by the light of human compulsions. Having deliberately adopted this country as a working field for his lifetime, he feels (he has told me all this) that he is bound to stay at his post, working as long as he can. He does not recognise the theory of a man earning idleness. Of course there is a time when faculties begin to fail; and when the close of life draws upon a man, he may perhaps lawfully rest awhile before the end; but to abandon his work in the prime of life and health and faculty, requires, he thinks, a better reason to justify it before God, than having a certain number of pounds a year."

"It would rather astonish the senior officers of the service to tell them that their having enough to live upon was no reason for going. Fancy our old Major being told that he had no right to take 30,000 rupees from us for his step, and go home!"

"I fancy, Wykham, the senior officers might be, as you say, very considerably astonished in many ways, could they be persuaded for a moment to realise the fact that an income did not fix the limits of man's duties and movements; but your *reductio ad absurdum* (for such I suppose you meant that speech to be) fails you; of course, to apply true principles to a conclusion whose premises have been grounded on false ones, gives an absurd result."

"Steady, old fellow, steady! don't come the Oxford man quite so severely!"

Oakfield laughed.

"Well, but look here: you apply what I said, or rather what Middleton said, about retiring, and so on, to the case of a man who has been serving all his time in the mere spirit of worldliness, and of course the combination of a worldly twenty-five years, with a spiritual idea tacked on at the end, is merely ludicrous. It is a common fallacy, and one which is apt, I think, to puzzle us all, till we detect it. I have heard men try to make what they call religion, ridiculous, by attributing some so-called religious act or speech to a notoriously worldly careless man. Of course the result is absurd, as real inconsistency always is; and therefore people are too apt carelessly to attach the absurdity to the isolated religious act, whereas it consists only in its apparent connexion with years of iniquity. The incongruity is as ludicrous as the motley of a fool; red need not be an absurd colour for a dress, nor blue; but blue and red in contiguity are so. That is the reason why men find it so difficult to get from wrong to right. They are conscious that the change involves an inconsistency, an absurdity; and wrongly attribute this to the right which they wish to do."

"Give an instance, and I shall understand you better."

"Why, I will take one of the strongest possible instances; a man gets into a passion, insults—say strikes—another, and is challenged by the man he has aggrieved. In a cooler temper he regrets his passion, and thinks it wrong to fight. But to allege this conviction now exposes him to the reasonable charge of hypocrisy and cowardice. The inconsistency here is not only absurd but odious. In nine cases out of ten he will shrink from the absurdity and the odium, and fight; thereby avoiding the inconsistency by a wicked integrity; but if he had been wise, he would have seen that the inconsistency was the painful consequence of his first sin; that there was nothing odious or hypocritical in his refusal to fight; that that was still right, still his duty. Duty is not foolish, cannot be so; only looks so when set in striking juxtaposition with neglect or breach of duty. This is only in the collocation. No man can turn from wrong to right without paying the tax of inconsistency, and risking the charge of hypocrisy; the more flagrant the former wrong, the heavier the tax, the greater the charge. To the habitually conscientious man every lapse from duty involves this struggle and this charge, self-made if by no other."

"That is a hard case, you suppose?" said Wykham, musingly.

"Very, but possible."

"Do you think that, under these circumstances, a man would really be wrong in fighting?"

"As wrong as Herod was in killing John the Baptist, to save his consistency."

"But consider the fearful weight with which the charge of hypocrisy would fall in such a case."

"Fearful, certainly; a martyrdom if you like, but one which a man should prefer to sin, even as he should the actual martyrdom unto death."

"You have the best of it in theory, certainly."

"And the only thing which makes you lay the stress on *theory*, Wykham, is the difficulty of practice; but a thing is not the less right or wrong for being difficult. Well, but that was an instance of what I meant, when I spoke of the fallacy of applying a true conclusion to false premises. Now, in Middleton's case, the premises have been eminently true. He has lived all his life in the fear of God, doing his duty, not to man, but to God: you can fancy no absurdity in the end of such a man's service being calculated on other than worldly principles. He has felt a consciousness of right and wrong, duty and sin, every day through twenty years of service: it is not wonderful that he should retain this consciousness in one

particular act, is it? So I think he looks forward as much as you or I do to visiting home, as an oasis in what can never be a happy life."

"Never—do you think? Well, I don't think so: I think we get on very well."

"Very well; but not happily. I do not think exile can ever be happy. And there are other drawbacks not acutely painful, but of a chronic nature, that makes our life out here a wholesomely sad one, in my opinion."

"You mean the climate?"

"That for one thing: the ugliness of the country is another."

"Simla is beautiful."

"But we do not live at Simla; and I think the utter hideousness of the plains is painful and deteriorating, unless guarded against."

"You mean that the mind has a tendency to become as blank as the country?"

"Something like that: well, then, there are the natives."

"Brutes!" ejaculated the other.

"Wykham, Wykham!" Oakfield said, reproachfully.

"Well, I do detest the natives; they are a mean, lying, fawning, sordid race; and after ten years' experience, I say that to call a native 'a man and a brother,' is a lie. He is not a man; and I re-

pudiate the fraternity of a scoundrel who lies at every other word."

"My experience is much less than yours, and I grant you their lying is most awful; but then this is just one of the evils which I say weigh upon us in this country. It is grievous to live among men, and feel the idea of fraternity thwarted by facts; and yet the idea must not be abandoned as false or hopeless. We must not resign ourselves, without a struggle, to calling them brutes."

"I think we may call them what they are."

"Yes, but be sure of what they are first; you know yourself that there are many good points in the natives."

"But what do you say in defence of their lying? you shirk that."

"It is hard to know what to say; nothing to defend it, certainly; but then, I believe, they lie a great deal less than we suppose."

"We must suppose they lie infinitely then, for no supposition within finite bounds can exceed the truth."

"Do you like your servants?" Oakfield asked by way of answer.

"Well, I certainly like them better than any other natives, but then I flatter myself they are a good set; they have been with me too for a long time."

"And yet you will find that I think *mine* a good set; and almost every man thinks *his* a good set, and likes his own servants much better than any other natives."

"Well, what then?"

"Why this, at least, that they improve upon acquaintance, and that we abuse those least whom we are best qualified to pronounce upon."

Wykham laughed. "You have me in a trap; but as Galileo remarked, 'they *lie* still!'"

"Rather unfair to represent poor Galileo as the pertinacious holder of a prejudice; he introduced the new system recollect. 'They still are better than you think, still men, still souls:' this is what he would shout, this new doctrine, yet as old as the fact of the earth going round the sun in itself. The fact is not new, but only our knowledge of it."

"You merely assert this; Galileo could prove his new fact."

"It would have existed even if he had not proved it. I consider the fact we agreed to just now is part proof. We esteem them the better, the more we know them. Why? because we learn to look at things from their view, instead of arrogantly assuming our own as the true one, and condemning them for not coming up to it. So if we knew them well (which, remember, neither you

nor I do), we should find them men even as we are, looking at truth from a different point of view, and a much worse one, which is their misfortune; but still their view is as honest as ours, and in some things as sufficient."

"I trust there is no point of view from which you can so discern truth as to consider it venial to lie."

"I am sure you exaggerate the lying of the natives, Wykham. You and I could not get on with our servants in every-day life, if truth was not far more habitual to them than falsehood. For all you say of their lying, you believe much the greater part of what they say; but allowing that lying is a national vice, and a detestable one, they might retaliate. It is quite conceivable that a good Brahmin, if you can find such an one, shall be as disgusted at our national drunkenness (for judging from our soldiers they will call it a national vice) as we are at their national falsehood. But after all, I grant freely that they are a deplorably inferior race, but I do not see why they should be considered hopelessly so. I know they have souls; and I believe their souls to be as glorious and majestic as yours or mine, though perhaps more terribly hampered. But I grant freely, Wykham, that it is much easier to say all this than to believe and act upon it; indeed this latter is so hard as to

constitute, as I said, one of the drawbacks to happiness in India. To overlook the merely artificial distinctions of rank and money, is difficult, as we see by every day's experience in Europe; how much more the real distinctions of colour and language."

"And do you think that we are bound to overlook these distinctions, which you yourself allow to be real?"

"I do; depend upon it, he approaches the nearest to wisdom who advances farthest in self-restrained liberty; and every barrier that is removed, every distinction that is merged in a growing sense of unity, is an approach to a higher liberty. There is only one real permanent distinction, that is, between good and evil; within this there are a million others, some absolutely wrong, some venial, some even desirable as expedients, but all defective, all temporary; we should be ever trying to get rid of them all one by one. We shall have never finished this work on earth, but the approach to it is the course of truth."

Such conversations became frequent between Oakfield and Wykham. Those who had long known the latter were struck by the change in him; and yet, although he rather withdrew from society, and became fonder and fonder of Oakfield every day, preferred his company to all other,

yet all would have confirmed the truth of Oakfield's saying, that his lightsomeness was not gone, not diminished really, though you could not but be conscious that it traversed a more serious background than formerly. They were both much occupied in reading. They read Shakspeare together; Oakfield had commenced his long-purposed course of French and German study. One morning in August, he was thus engaged in his own room; Wykham was out; he always went out before breakfast, and was generally the bearer of letters from the post on his return. While Oakfield was engaged in trying to set straight a more than ordinarily complicated sentence of his complicated but now much-loved *Deutsch*, he heard the sound of his friend's horse as he galloped up at a pace that indicated eagerness, and in an instant Wykham himself rushed into the room with two or three letters in his hand, but holding also one already opened, and exclaimed—

"News! Oakfield, news! no, I shan't give you your letter, or you'll see in a moment. Guess!"

"Anybody I know."

"Yes."

"Ah, I know."

"What, what? I don't believe you do?"

"Ferozepore?" asked Oakfield.

A nod.

"Stanton?"

Another nod.

"Going to be married?"

"By Jove, yes! how came you to guess that?"

"I have been half expecting it for some months past. Miss Middleton, of course?"

"Of course."

"Well, it is one of the most entirely happy things I have heard for a long time."

"Yes; but just fancy that surly old ruffian proposing! Well, he'll be in decent order henceforth, that's one comfort; I should think Miss Middleton would soon break him in. She's not a girl to stand his 'humph' long, I'm pretty certain."

"Come, come, Fred," said Oakfield, "keep a civil tongue in your head and give me my letters."

"It's rather a bore," said Wykham, without noticing this last request, "your having guessed it. I meant to have some fun out of you; what a sharp look-out you keep under that demure speculative look of yours, Master Oakfield! How long is it since you noticed anything?"

"Fred, I see you want a good bit of gossip; and I can just tell you that you won't get it. You have called me demure too; a word I hate; I shall resent it by telling you nothing; come,—letters."

"What do you want?" said Wykham, as Oakfield stretched out his hand,—"oh, I forgot your letters. Well, here's one from Stanton, ditto to mine I fancy, and here's one I can't make out, for it has the Simla post-mark and is 'Private Service.'"

"Do give me my letters, you regular old Mrs. Mailsetter. Look here, Wykham," he added laughing, after reading Stanton's letter, "he agrees with me you see."

Stanton's epistle was characteristic.

"DEAR OAKFIELD,

"I am engaged to be married. Fred will be astonished; you, I fancy, less so. You are deeper than you would care to be thought, I suspect. I detected a look of yours once or twice, at Ferozepore, which would have done credit to any old lady gossip of the station. Fan sends her kind regards to you. Of course you understand it is Miss Middleton I am going to marry.

"Most affectionately yours,

"H. STANTON."

"P.S.—Don't let that griff Wykham go and chatter about this all over Simla."

"Griff indeed!" said Wykham in high dudgeon.

"Oh, murder," said Oakfield, "I forgot the postscript; bear up, Fred: you must own it was a needful caution."

"A caution wanted most for the old lady gossip sort of observers," retaliated Wykham; then added, with a comical seriousness, "I must never trust a serious man again: I find them impostors."

Oakfield did not hear this last speech; he was engaged in reading his second letter. It seemed short, but engrossing all his attention notwithstanding.

"Just read this," he said, handing the note to Wykham.

It was an important document; a demi-official note from the Governor General's Private Secretary, stating that the fact of his having saved one of the colours of his regiment from falling into the hands of the enemy at Chillianwalla, had been brought to the favorable notice of the government, and informing him, finally, that he had been appointed an Assistant Commissioner in the newly annexed territory of the Punjab.

"Hurrah!" exclaimed Wykham, as he heard this; "I congratulate you most heartily, my boy; I knew they must do something for you. Do you like the notion of civil employ?"

"Yes," said Oakfield, who still sat back in his chair in a musing fit; "Yes, I think I do."

"Think you do! that's a cool way for an Ensign to talk when he gets a civil appointment flung at his head."

Oakfield smiled. "Very good of the flingers, certainly, Fred; but it's a queer thing, isn't it?"

"What's queer? What a fellow you are, Oakfield! I know if I had an appointment offered me, I shouldn't stop to consider what there was queer in it."

"No, but don't you think it *is* an odd thing, to reward a military service—to call mine such—with a civil appointment? I wonder if they ever give a good magistrate a commission in the army!"

"Oakfield, you are an ungrateful dog, and I shall write a civil refusal for you."

"It is too bad upon my word, but the oddity of it would occur to me for the moment. Refusal? No, Fred, I shall instantly write a most grateful acceptance."

He did accordingly, and showed it to Wykham.

"Well, you are gracious enough on paper, certainly; let me add a postscript to say you were laughing at and abusing them for offering it just before you wrote. Do you know, Oakfield, I begin to think you are an extremely artful dodger."

"Come, Fred, gently; who dodged up to the hills for four seasons running? Four years in the hills, and the fifth in England! Oh, Fred, Fred! blush if you have any bowels of compassion for poor John Company, whom you have so scandalously defrauded of service."

"Defrauded! I scorn the imputation. Have I not lived in India for them, worn their uniform, commanded their black troopers, devoted a fraction of one of my valuable legs to them? And if I had defrauded them, I fancy John has bowels enough of his own without indenting on me. But, I say, Oakfield, let us have a look at you; well, now do you know you *have* rather the air of a Civil Officer."

Oakfield laughed, but he had much to think of; Stanton's engagement, his own so suddenly altered prospects had to be considered quietly, and as Wykham was evidently not in a quiet vein, he withdrew to his own room, where in the course of the morning he wrote two long letters, one to his mother and another to Stanton.

The next month and a half were spent in great peace and enjoyment at Simla, but October was to all the three friends a most eventful month. Oakfield received official intimation of his appointment to Lahore; he had entertained some hopes of being sent to Ferozepore, but of course could not expect it. On the 15th of October, however, both he and Wykham were present at Mr. Middleton's house at Ferozepore, at Stanton's wedding, and the same evening Wykham started for Calcutta, *en route* to England.

"Don't forget to go to Leatheburn within six

weeks of your arrival," were nearly the last words Oakfield said to him.

"I think not," said Wykham; "nor to write you a full account of my arrival there. Good bye, my dear Oakfield," he said in an altered tone; "thank you, and God bless you."

While Oakfield was still meditating on that word "thank you," the palki was lifted up, and the homeward-bound journey was begun.

"So it is," soliloquised Oakfield, "Stanton married, and half separated from me: Wykham gone to England, and I must go to my strange untried work alone. But what a fool and worse I am to talk like this! Am I a child that I must have my friends to hold me up through life? Besides, thank Heaven, there is Middleton still left."

"Thank you for that kind word, dear Edward," said Mr. Middleton, who came up behind him, and was an unintentional listener to this sentence; "come, I know your thoughts, it happens to us all in India. My hearth seems rather desolate to-day, but I can thank God for it notwithstanding."

They shook hands cordially and entered the house.

CHAP. V.

"Here on our native soil we breathe once more;
The cock that crows, the smoke that curls, that sound
Of bells, those boys who in yon meadow-ground
In white-sleeved shirts are playing, and the roar
Of the waves breaking on the chalky shore—
All—all are English."

WORDSWORTH.

We trust the reader will not be unwilling to return to Leatheburn. It is the beginning of February, in 1850. Four years have passed since we last accompanied the Oakfields to Lodore, and marked changes have come over some of the party; no rude revolutionary changes however, none but what have been wrought by the gentle process of growth and gradual development. Mrs. Oakfield is the one on whom the lapse of time seems to have impressed its mark the least; her dark hair still shines as brightly as then: her soft face is still as loveable as ever: her eyes beam as tenderly when she smiles upon her children. Neither is Margaret much changed: she is in the very bloom of youthful womanhood, just two-and-twenty: the whole party seem to lean towards and

depend upon her, much as they used to do: nor is there any diminution perceptible in her willing joy at serving and pleasing others. Rose and Mary are now nine and ten years old; both as pretty as they promised to be: Rose, as of old, takes the lead: her unflagging spirits, more than her years of seniority, giving her the command over the more sedate little Mary. But it is a kind rule. Margaret is their teacher, their playmate: beginning even thus early to be their friend and companion. Herby is the most changed: he is now sixteen, *in tails*, a prefect at Winchester, his holidays just drawing to a close; but he stands this time, so trying to body and mind, well. Of course he is not free from all its physical disagreeables: the queer changes in his voice from squeak to growl, make Rose and Mary and even Margaret laugh at times. They *like* the squeak, for it seems the last relic (no pleasing one, it must be owned, in fact, however delightful to the imagination) of childhood: of course Herbert himself prefers the more manly growl. There is too about him some of the awkwardness which invariably attends the transition from boyhood to incipient manhood: an assumed dignity, with the least possible tinge of swagger in it, is sometimes perceptible to those who watch him closely; but he is full of boyish fun still; very kind to his sisters;

and as fond of his mother as when he was a little child. He walks about by himself a good deal now, spends afternoons on the side of Helvellyn, with his fishing-rod; he is fortunate to have hills and streams and rocks to bestow his idleness upon. He is as romantic as Edward was before him; writes verses, which he shows to Margaret: he is sixteen, so probably in love. He certainly does find the time hang a little heavy now and then, especially just at the end of the holidays, when, like the juvenile so admirably depicted in *Punch*, "he has read all the books in the house." One great resource for him is to walk down, about eleven o'clock, to the inn, and see the mail change. He is a great friend of both the coachman and guards, and knows exactly their respective days for working up and down. It is on the 3rd of February, 1850, that we introduce Herby, again, sauntering down by the lake side towards the King's Head.

He found the four horses waiting in a shed, in readiness for the change, but the mail had not yet appeared in sight, although the first point from which it became visible was nearly a mile off. Presently, however, Herby descried the dark object just coming in sight over the brow of the hill, and communicated the fact to his friend the ostler, who thereupon brought out his team into the road.

Both the ostler and Herby watched the mail with great interest as it from time to time disappeared and again emerged from among the trees and windings of the road.

"A poor load to-day," said the former, "I only see one upon the roof."

Suddenly the loud blast of the horn was heard: the mail dashed round the last obscuring corner, came at a fast trot down the gentle declivity, and pulled up in most scientific style at the door of the King's Head. Herby was too much occupied in gazing at the mail itself, his darling object, watching the change of horses, and talking to his friend the coachman, to pay much attention to the solitary passenger on the box. The passenger, however, got down: this was nothing; he probably got down for a change; but Herby was surprised when he heard him ask the guard to get his portmanteau out of the boot; it was almost the first time that he had ever seen any passenger, except himself or one of his own family, get down at the King's Head. He began to observe the new arrival more attentively, as he dived into the boot to instruct the guard which portmanteau belonged to him, and which to the old gentleman inside.

The stranger was a young man, apparently less than thirty, with dark, rather curly, hair, very bright brown eyes, and a pleasant, rather laughing

countenance. He was dressed in a black paletot; but, as he got down, Herby observed, across his arm, instead of the dark brown great-coat, which is as usual a concomitant of the English gentleman on his travels as a Mackintosh was once, and as a portmanteau and carpet-bag are now, a huge blue cloak, lined with red, with brass buttons. This appendage, together with his black curly moustache, might have suggested to Herbert that he was a soldier, even had he not heard the coachman, when acknowledging an apparently liberal donation, say, "Thank you, Captain: good morning, Sir."

While Herby was still wondering what on earth this person — Captain, or whatever he was — could be wanting at Leatheburn, looking out in vain for some gun-case or fishing-rod, whose connection with the grouse of Helvellyn, or the trout of the Red Tarn, might solve the mystery, he heard him ask the coachman, "Can you tell me whereabouts Mrs. Oakfield lives?"

"Here's a young gentleman as I dare say can tell you," replied the coachman, pointing to Herby, who said (a little awkwardly, but with polite intention), —

"I shall be happy to show you the way up to Leatheburn."

The stranger started as he turned and looked at his offered guide, but accepted his offer readily,

and after one last look from Herby at the mail, they started off on the little path through the wood.

"I am lucky in having so good a guide," said the unknown, after they had gone about a mile through the twistings of a beautiful but very intricate wood, "I should never have found the path by myself."

"Why, no," said Herby, rather proudly, "this is the short cut, which I fancy you could not have found: the regular path is easy enough, lower down by the lake there."

"You seem to know it well."

"I ought to, I have lived here all my life."

"I beg your pardon if I am wrong," said the other; "but surely, I think you must be Herbert."

Herby started.

"How on earth did you know that?" he said; "I never saw you, did I?"

"Probably not: I certainly never saw you."

Herby looked quite puzzled; but there was something so good-natured in his companion's laughing eyes as he enjoyed his amazement, that he felt encouraged to join in the joke, though generally rather reserved and shy of strangers.

"Do you always guess people's names before you see them?"

"I didn't guess yours; I knew it."

"And yet you never saw me, nor any of us,"

pointing, as he spoke, to the house, which just became visible on the opposite side of a deep bay of the lake, at one horn of which they now emerged from their wooded path.

"No, none of you up there, certainly, though I hope soon to have the pleasure of doing so; but I was never in this part of the world before, and a most lovely part it is."

"Is it not?" said Herby, forgetting his wonder in his readily-stirred enthusiasm about his beloved Cumberland; "well, but about this; I give it up."

His companion laughed heartily. "I will tell you more," he said; "you are at Winchester."

"Yes," said Herby, now quite resigned; "go on."

"You have three sisters?"

"Yes."

"One older and two younger?"

"This is getting awful," said Herby, in a tone of affected terror.

"You have an elder brother?"

"Yes."

"Called Edward?"

"Yes."

"In the Indian Army?"

"Yes."

"Very like you in face, and about the best fellow that ever lived."

"Ah!" exclaimed Herby, "you know Ned?"

"I am proud to say I rather do know Ned; and I hope Ned has told you that he knows Fred Wykham?"

"Oh!" said Herby, "how stupid of me not to guess! Why he told us we might expect to see you some time in February; how very odd my meeting you in this way!" Then assuming, to a slight extent, the acting head of the family, he added, "Allow me to welcome you to Leatheburn, Captain Wykham."

"Thank you," said the other, shaking heartily his extended hand, "but don't introduce me to your mother as 'Captain' Wykham, please."

"Why not? what are you?"

"Only 'Mr.' I fear; unless the junior Captain and five senior Lieutenants have disappeared since the date of my last accounts from the regiment."

"Well, but I heard the coachman call you 'Captain.'"

"Ah! that you see was a brevet he kindly gave me; he found out as we came along that I was in the army, and seemed to take such pleasure in be-Captaining me, that it would have been cruel to undeceive him. Oh how very beautiful!" he suddenly exclaimed, as a bend brought immediately to view the whole length of the fairy-like lake, with its magnificent boundaries — Helvellyn,

Raven Crag—in the remoter distance, Blencathra and Skiddaw—and in the immediate foreground the Oakfields' house, not more than a hundred yards from them.

"I'll just run on," said Herby, "and tell my mother you're coming; unless," he added, archly, "you wish to make experiments upon them as you did on me."

"No, no; quite right: better run on; I'll wait here till I see you coming back to meet me."

So Herby ran off to the house, burst into the drawing-room, and with a somewhat startling abruptness announced, "Mother, a visitor;" this message seemed hardly worthy of the excitement with which it was announced.—"A friend of Edward's from India;" this time a sensation *was* produced; and when Herby doled out the climax of his intelligence—"his friend, Fred Wykham, whom he wrote about, you know; he's waiting while I tell you," the quiet party was broken up. Mrs. Oakfield told Herby to go and call him directly, and sank back on her seat on the sofa. It seemed like being brought nearer to her son than she had been for four long years. Margaret shared this feeling; and Rose and Mary, who scented a holiday from afar, were busily and *con amore* engaged in putting away the lesson books.

Presently the noise of steps was heard in the hall, and Herby, throwing open the door, announced with more formality than was strictly necessary—"Mr. Wykham!" and in walked Fred, limping a little (for he had not entirely recovered from the effects of his Mooltan wound), his handsome, good-humoured countenance crossed by an unwonted shade of embarrassment; for these meetings with people whom you have heard much of, and who have heard much of you, yet who are, notwithstanding, perfect strangers, however pleasant in anticipation, however delightful when previous report has been confirmed by a few days' or even hours' intercourse, are, in their actual commencement, undoubtedly embarrassing.

Wykham was the first to recover himself; and his frank yet perfectly polite and respectful manner soon set all the party at their ease. He told them, in a whimsical way, of the trick he had played upon Herby; talked of his voyage, and different things, but neither side felt quite prepared yet to touch upon the subject which was uppermost in the thoughts of each.

"Have you been long in England, Mr. Wykham?" asked Margaret.

"Nearly seven weeks, I am ashamed to say."

"Why ashamed?"

"Because I promised your brother to present myself here as his ambassador, in six weeks at least from the day of my landing."

"We have no reason to quarrel with you, I am sure, but rather to be much obliged to you for being so punctual when you must have had a great deal to detain you at your own home. Were you ever at the lakes before you went to India?"

"No, never."

"Have you been in any mountain country?"

"None but the Himalayas."

"Ah, I forgot; you will think nothing of our little mole-hills after those giants."

"I beg your pardon, Miss Oakfield; from what I have already seen, I assure you I give the preference to these lovely mole-hills of yours, very decidedly. Ned always told me, — by the bye, does it sound odd to you to hear a perfect stranger talking of your brother as Ned?"

"Rather, perhaps," said Mrs. Oakfield, smiling, "but very pleasant, certainly."

"Well, you know, I have been calling him nothing else for the last three years."

"Where did you last see him, Mr. Wykham?" asked Margaret.

"At Middleton's house,—did you ever hear of Mr. Middleton, by the bye?"

"Of Ferozepore? oh, yes!— all the names of

Edward's friends are household words with us;" then recollecting that Wykham was one of those friends, she stopped rather abruptly, and blushed; Wykham understood, and was too polite to add to her embarrassment by a spooney compliment.

"Well, it was at Middleton's house, at Ferozepore, on the 15th of October, just as I got into my palki to start for Calcutta, the very day that Stanton—another friend of ours, Miss Oakfield—was married."

"And how was he looking?" was Mrs. Oakfield's natural and thoroughly maternal question.

"Why, pretty well; I cannot honestly give you as good an account as I should wish; but then he was depressed, I think, at losing Stanton, and, if I may say so, my unworthy self; but certainly very much better, indeed, than he had looked some months previously, before he went to Simla. But you must have heard from him long after I saw him last?"

"We got letters only yesterday," said Mrs. Oakfield, "dated the 20th of December, but he said nothing about his health; he never does."

"Where was he? at Lahore, I suppose?—how did he like his work?"

"At Lahore; and he seemed to be beginning to like his work a little better than he did at first; he says it is very hard."

"So it must be, I fancy; and he will find it harder in the hot weather."

"You are consoling," said Margaret, laughing.

"Ah, I forgot; I must not be a Job's comforter; but no wish to please can make cutcherry in the hot weather pleasant, I fancy."

"Cutcherry!—what's that?"

"Has he not explained that word yet?—Cutcherry means properly—the court; or in plain words, the great ugly white-washed room, wherein he sits all day and does his work."

"And what is his work?" said Mrs. Oakfield; "can you try to give us some idea of it?"

"Why, I have not often been in a cutcherry, but I think I know its principal characteristics. At this moment I suppose—let me see, what time is it?"

"About one."

"Well, that you know is seven with him; ah! I don't suppose he is at work yet. This is quite a cool month, and the offices do not open, I believe, till ten or eleven, except in the hot weather, when they begin very early in the morning. But at about eleven o'clock to-day, just as it is beginning to get dark here, I suppose if you could transport yourself to Lahore, you would see him occupying the only chair in a large bare white room, the doors all thrown wide open, the whole space thronged with natives, standing, sitting,

squatting, chattering. In the midst of all this hubbub, you would see poor Ned seated at a table covered with papers, written in strange characters; on the ground, by his side, a man jabbering Hindustanee, at about the same pace that a Frenchman talks. He is reading part of a case; either a petition, or an evidence, or an order connected with it; for the whole proceedings in all cases in those courts are committed to writing, and then read aloud to the magistrate."

"And," said Herby, "does Edward put people in prison, and so on?"

"Yes, I believe he has the power of imprisonment."

"But he is very young for that, is he not?" said Herbert, with a natural wonder, all his experience of magistrates being derived from the venerable gentlemen who assembled weekly at the court-house at Winchester.

"Well, I suppose he is; but you know men get to their work early in India."

"Were you a magistrate?" asked Herby.

"I! no; I never was anything except a Lieutenant in my regiment; it is only lucky fellows, like your brother Ned, who get appointments. Not that it was luck in his case; you heard of his saving the colour at Chillianwalla?"

"Yes," said Herby; "but tell us all about it."

"Well, I wasn't there myself, you know, any more than you were, but I'll tell you what I heard of it as well as I can;" and he told the story with considerable animation, to Herbert's unutterable delight; who followed it up with innumerable questions about battles, sieges, marches, &c., &c.; all of which Wykham very good-humouredly answered; indeed, he was pleased and amused by the ardent temper and eager inquiries of the boy.

At last Mrs. Oakfield, who had been listening with an equal but rather more shuddering interest, interposed, "You see how you must expect to be worried by us all, Mr. Wykham."

Of course Fred protested that nothing could be so delightful as such worrying.

"Well, but at any rate you must not be worried out of your dinner. Herby, show Mr. Wykham to his room,—the one next your own."

Wykham returned, having made himself presentable, and found them all present except Mrs. Oakfield. Meanwhile, Rose and Mary, who had been all the while prowling round the new comer, taking observations, now made their advances more boldly, and at last came to close quarters; so that Mrs. Oakfield, on entering the room, found Rose thoroughly established on a flirtation footing.

Dinner was now announced; and after dinner

they all went out for a walk round the lake. Of course the conversation turned, without ending, upon Edward; Wykham relating numberless little anecdotes that no one would ever mention in a letter, which seemed to give such reality to that distant strange life; while he on his part had a thousand spots pointed out to him as associated with Edward; was delighted and affected to find how his friend lived amongst his family; stored up a thousand particulars for that tremendous journal-letter which he despatched by the next Southampton mail to reach poor Edward in the midst of his cutcherry toils, to drive him nearly mad with pain and pleasure.

By the end of that first day Fred Wykham was established with all, from Mrs. Oakfield to Mary, as a friend of the family; and even the old gardener, who was generally rather shy of new comers, who had been a soldier himself in early days, and had contrived in the course of the day to get a talk with Wykham about Mooltan, expressed his opinion to Herby next day, that "the Captain from India was a fine young man."

When Wykham had been at Leatheburn about a week, the time came for Herbert to return to Winchester: he evinced a most unwonted reluctance to leave home, and spoke of the approaching half-year with impatience, almost with dis-

gust. As the day approached matters grew worse. On the very morning of his departure he had a long walk with his mother, who, after he was gone, seemed depressed and agitated in a degree greater than the mere usual separation would account for. Margaret saw that there was something the matter, and when he was gone, the following conversation took place between her and Mrs. Oakfield:—

"You have seen, Margaret," said the latter, "how uneasy and restless poor Herby has been about returning to school this time?"

"Yes, I have—and was surprised at it."

"I wish, Margaret, that Mr. Wykham had not come."

Margaret looked surprised; it was about the first time she had ever seemed to hear her mother make an inhospitable speech; and of Mr. Wykham too, who had told them all about Edward, and whom on that account, as well as his own, they were all disposed to like so much.

"At least," added Mrs. Oakfield, "I wish he had come a week later."

"What, so that Herby would have missed him?" said Margaret, still more surprised; "why Herby, I thought, seemed so fond of him."

"Indeed he was, and I do not wonder at it; he is just the person to attract such a boy as Herby;

and yet I wish it had been otherwise; for he has, most unconsciously, had a very disturbing, unsettling influence upon the dear boy. What do you think was the subject of our conversation this morning?"

Margaret had no idea.

"Fancy his wanting to go to India!"

Margaret understood it all, and almost wondered that she had not thought of it before. Why it was the old story: a young, handsome, dashing cavalry soldier, coming home with honour, and talking about battles and sieges, and so on, had of course made the young high-spirited boy of sixteen mad to throw away his stupid books, and mount the red or blue jacket, and be off to do likewise. Margaret understood it all, and looked very grave.

"I could not refuse him if he set his heart upon it," his mother added; "and yet, Margaret, I think it would kill me."

"But, mother, we have no reason to think he will set his heart upon it; he has been excited by Mr. Wykham's conversation, and manner, and circumstances; it is a pity, certainly. I wish, as you say, that Mr. Wykham had waited a week longer, though it seems almost ungracious to say so—does it not?"

"I am sure, Margaret, he need have no sus-

picion of not being welcome; the most welcome guest that has come into our house since your brother left it—and that not only for Edward's sake; I admire his kind, gentle, soldier-like bearing very greatly: he often reminds me of some I used to see in my youthful days, when soldiers and sailors were more plentiful than they are now-a-days, and more thought of; but that has all nothing to do with Herby—God bless him."

"No; but, mother, I was going to say, that I do not really think there is much danger of his seriously setting his heart upon India. He would, when he began to think seriously of it, shrink from the idea of leaving home, as acutely as Edward did, and he would not have Edward's all-constraining motive to carry him through. He has just been excited, as I suppose boys of his age easily are, and now it is a very good thing that he is gone, darling fellow, and at Winchester he will soon forget Mr. Wykham and India, depend upon it: but still it is very unfortunate; how I wish Edward could speak to him!"

"He might write to him," said her mother.

"Not till the Winchester half was almost over, and the mischief perhaps done. No; I think the best plan would be to get Mr. Wykham to write to him."

It was agreed that this was the best plan. "After all," said Margaret, "I have no great

dread of Herby's actually going to India. He would never make up his mind to leave this beloved lake."

They had reached, as she spoke, the foot of the lawn of velvet-like turf, which sloped down to the lake bank. A little stone pier ran out into the water; the old green and white family boat rocked gracefully at a short distance from the shore, chained to its brown water-stained post; the air was mild and silky, as it is in a moist mild February day; the lake looked gray and warm; the mountains seemed to share in the universal gentleness that pervaded all nature, as they lay in their soft outline, now crossed by fleecy clouds, now haunted by the play of the passing sun-gleam. The sanguine spring flowers, the crocusses and snow-drops in the garden were bursting into life, able and willing to forget that one gentle day does not make a spring, that March winds and frosts will too surely come to nip that precious life. In the back-ground, the old house of rough country stone, overgrown with roses and other creepers. In its neutral colour, its picturesque shape, its kindly hospitable comfort — in rare harmony with the beauty that enshrined it — nestled under the woody crags of Leatheburn Fells, as though it were itself a true part and parcel of the friendly hills. Well might Margaret think

that Herbert would be unwilling to leave such a home.

All that day Margaret was puzzling herself as to how she should introduce the subject with Wykham, when the latter unconsciously helped her, by saying,

"Your brother did not seem at all to like going back to school this morning, Miss Oakfield, which is not to be wondered at. What a fine young fellow he is!—very like Ned; only I should say more fiery."

"He is not generally so reluctant to go back to Winchester," said Margaret, making a side-movement towards the point; "I hope you appreciate the compliment which he paid you by his unusual indisposition to leave home."

Wykham laughed incredulously.

"Poor Herby! I don't feel guilty of having much to do with his distress, I must say."

"You had really, though," said Margaret gravely.

Wykham looked puzzled, and thought Margaret seemed a great deal more serious than there was any occasion for.

"What do you mean?" he asked.

"I am avenging poor Herby for the trick you played him," said Margaret, laughing; "you do look so delightfully puzzled, Mr. Wykham: what will you say then, when I tell you that you have

sent poor Herby away in distress, and made mamma very unhappy and uneasy about him?"

"I should say," replied Wykham, in his turn becoming grave, "that I had most unconsciously done a mischief which it would be quite impossible for me to laugh at." He did not mean this for a rebuke; but Margaret felt it as such, and coloured as she said,

"You are right, Mr. Wykham; this is not so fair a joke as you made upon dear Herby. No; the matter is simply this: you *have* perplexed us all a little, though, as you say, most unconsciously and most innocently. The fact is, Herby told mamma, before he went away this morning, that he wanted to go to India."

Wykham's surprise overpowered his good manners, and evaporated into a long semi-whistle.

"And although," added Margaret, "mamma does not think that he will really settle down into a serious purpose about it, yet she fears (and I think she is right) its unsettling him just now, and giving him a distaste for his Winchester work."

"I see—I see; it was that Mooltan business, I suppose, did the mischief; what a griff I was to go bragging about my campaigns, as if any good could possibly come of it!"

Margaret could not bear to see anybody suffering unjustly, even by his own reproaches.

"I am sure, Mr. Wykham, you have no cause to reproach yourself for your kindness to Herby."

Wykham felt more pleased than he had perhaps any business to be at such a simple remark: he tried, as is the treacherous manner of men, to elicit a repetition of the consolation by a reiteration of what had drawn it forth, but was disappointed: Margaret was silent, and he soon grew tired of abusing himself uncontradicted.

"What is to be done?" he continued; "I wouldn't for any consideration be the guilty cause of any man's going to that wretched country; I wish Herby was lying as I was this time last year, in all the agonies of a painful wound, in a state of helpless incapacity, while my regiment was in the field, and overwhelmed by perpetual dust-storms!"

"Herby is very much obliged to you, I am sure," said Margaret, laughing, "but we mean to ask you to apply a less severe remedy."

"How — what?" exclaimed Wykham; "of course I shall be only too glad to do anything."

"We thought, that is mamma and I, that you would perhaps write him a letter" (Wykham looked all abroad): "just to tell him that Indian life was not altogether made up of glorious battles and sieges."

"I see, I see," cried Wykham, "give him a hair of the dog that bit him; I and India dividing the character of dog between us; depend upon it,

Miss Oakfield, I will write him a letter by to-day's post."

"You cannot," interrupted Margaret, laughing at his energy, "unfortunately it went out three hours ago."

"Well, well, to-morrow; and if there is virtue in words, he shall, after reading it, hate India with as profound a hatred and abhorrence as I do, though that is a bold word."

"Poor Herby! he will be puzzled by your 'look on this picture and on this;' your glorious siege of Mooltan, and your threatened letter. However, Mr. Wykham, if you will try to drive this Indian scheme out of his head, I believe you will be doing him, and all of us too, a very great service."

Wykham was prompt to redeem his promise; he wrote that night a letter to Herby, certainly not holding out any very inviting picture of Indian life; told him that battles and sieges were all very well, but were dearly earned by long years of uncomfortable inactivity; told him that of every hundred who went every year to India in haste, ninety-nine repented at leisure; quoted his own experience; how he had gone to India principally to get rid of his school work, and how he had ever since wished himself back again; told him how his own brother hated India, and concluded with

a glowing eulogy of home life in general, and such a home life as Leatheburn in particular.

It was all to no purpose; and if Mrs. Oakfield and Margaret had had more experience, they never would have expected much from such a plan. When a fire is lighted in a boy's fancy, no amount of preaching or practical experience will put it out. It is either to be met by counter irritation, that is kindling another flame in another and counteracting direction, to do which requires great art and patient kindness, or be suffered to burn itself out. Herby wrote back just such an answer as a boy of sixteen, with head well up, making a push at his first hobby, was likely to write. There was an importance in having a scheme for his whole life to discuss, in tossing carelessly off such words as India, ten years' service, furlough, the army, active service, &c., &c., which flattered his dignity. He wrote very good-humouredly, with a comical air of boyish experience, said that he was very much obliged to Wykham for his letter, but that he felt an active life would be more suited to him than a studious one (ah! how many boys have, ere now, used that phrase, and will use it again as a respectable way of saying they prefer being idle, and wearing a red coat, and becoming spurious men all at once, to going on steadily at their present work and *earning* genuine manhood by steadily serving out the period of boyhood; boys are sometimes

too much encouraged in the use of this language, which is seldom better than cant); said politely enough that Wykham's own honourable experience contradicted the evidence of his letter, and wound up with that *argumentum ad hominem*, so thoroughly characteristic of boy logic, closely associated as it is with all the *tu-quoque* region of dialecticks,—that if Wykham disliked India so very much, why was he himself intending to return to it at the expiration of his furlough? In fact, it was quite clear that Herby was precisely as obstinate as people with hobby-horses usually are; and the unfortunate results soon appeared in the unfavourable reports, which now, for the first time, began to be received from the Winchester authorities, of his idleness and indisposition to submit to ordinary school discipline.

This made Mrs. Oakfield very uneasy, and poor Wykham was really quite distressed at the mischief he had occasioned. He talked the matter over and over again with Margaret, but he could hit upon no remedy. It is not quite certain that Wykham expected much to result from these conferences, but he liked the intimate footing and feeling of confidence which they seemed to imply. At last, one evening about three weeks after Herbert's departure, Wykham said suddenly, as they sat at dinner (there had been received in the course of the day one of the unsatisfactory school

reports alluded to above), "I shall be obliged to wish you good bye to-morrow, Mrs. Oakfield."

Mrs. Oakfield and Margaret both started. There was nothing strange in the announcement; he had been staying for four weeks, and that is a very fair duration for any visit, but still it startled them. They had never supposed that he was to be a permanent inmate of Leatheburn, and yet they had not thought of his going. His intimacy with Edward, and his sympathy with them about Herby, had made him appear more in the light of a member of the family than an ordinary guest. Everybody urged him to stay; Rose and Mary not the least; Mrs. Oakfield was equally sincere, though less vehement in her assurances: "I had no idea you were going so soon, Mr. Wykham; we have no right to complain; it has been very good of you to give us so much of your time just after your arrival in England; but I trust you will recollect your promise to Rose and Mary, and give us the pleasure of another visit before long."

Wykham began with an animated and sincere declaration, that so far from there having been any self-denying virtue in the case, he had never been so happy in his life, when, thinking perhaps that he was speaking with rather excessive vehemence, he stopped abruptly and awkwardly, and said, "I really intended to ask you to let me return almost

immediately to complete my visit, which, though it has been already so long, I should be sorry to think of as over; in short, it is some business which calls me away, and if you will allow me, I shall be back here in a fortnight." Hereupon, Rose and Mary roared as heartily for joy as they had done, but a short time before, for grief. There could be little doubt as to the sincerity of their welcome; nor, indeed, of the more quiet but equally genuine assurance, which he received from Mrs. Oakfield, that they would all be glad to see him back again. "You will find a friend of ours here," she added, "upon your return."

Wykham looked at Margaret with the suspicious quickness of one already interested in knowing who were the friends of the house. "Oh!" he said, "indeed."

"A Mrs. Vernon," she continued, "whose name you may possibly have heard, as you seem to have heard everything about us from Edward."

"Vernon, Vernon — yes, I must have heard the name. Oh, yes; wasn't it the poor young fellow who died at Hajeepoor when Ned was there?"

"The same; and it is his mother and two sisters whom I am expecting next week. You are going to London I suppose?"

"Yes, to London, perhaps further."

"It seems a pity to go so far for so short a time.

Your business could not be transacted by letter, could it?"

"No, Mrs. Oakfield, indeed it could not; I have tried that once."

The speech and the laugh were rather a mystery to them, but they did not feel at liberty to ask more questions.

The next day (it was early in March) Wykham took his departure by the mail; as he entered the intricate wooded path by which Herby had conducted him on his first arrival, but which was now familiar to him, and looked across the bay at that peaceful happy house, he again wondered how Edward Oakfield could ever have left it, and this thought seemed somehow to suggest the purpose of his journey, for he turned and walked on a few steps; then stopped, turned and looked again at the house; looked so long and earnestly that his reverie was only disturbed by the sound of the guard's horn, at which signal he started, sighed, turned round once more, and ran off as fast as he could to the little inn where the mail had just pulled up, and where his luggage in a wheelbarrow had already arrived.

From all which stoppings and turnings, and lookings and sighings, the reader may conjecture, if he pleases, without fear of contradiction, that Wykham was in love.

CHAP. VI.

"Then in that time and place I spoke to her,
Requiring—though I knew it was mine own,
Yet for the pleasure that I took to hear—
Requiring at her hand the greatest gift,
A woman's heart, the heart of her I loved:
And in that time and place she answered me,
And in the compass of three little words
More musical than ever came in one,
The silver fragments of a broken voice
Made me most happy, lisping 'I am thine.'"

TENNYSON.

WYKHAM travelled all night, and reached London in the morning. After a bath and hasty ante-breakfast (which is called in India "a little breakfast") at the Euston Hotel, he proceeded to the private residence of a man of law in Montague Place, who recognised, but seemed surprised, at seeing him. "I thought, Mr. Wykham, you said you would not return from the north till the middle of April."

"Why, yes, I did say so, Wilson, but here I am you see: I am going to leave town again this evening, and wanted just to have a talk with you

about these affairs," taking some notes out of his pocket as he spoke.

"There is not much to talk about; Lady Prescot's will is proved; there never was any difficulty about it; and your first quarterly instalment of £1000 per annum, funded property, has been drawn by me, and lies to your credit at Drummond's."

"That's all right," said Wykham; "well, what I wanted to ask you was to send to Radley's, the East Indian agents, you know."

"I know, I know."

"And to tell them to draw my pay quarterly at the India House, and pay it into Drummond's."

"Certainly; but you don't mean to say you came up all the way from Westmoreland or Cumberland to tell me what might have been put into half a page of note paper?"

"No, not exactly; I had other business; don't look frightened, Wilson; nothing in the £. s. d. line; but besides, I have really business to do here also, for if this legacy is all right, I must make arrangements for retiring from the service."

"You don't mean to do that!"

"Not mean it! — don't I? Why on earth should I go back to that purgatory if I can live here? Why, it would be an insult to my good aunt's memory."

"At any rate," said the prudent attorney, "there's no hurry: you have three years' furlough, haven't you?"

"Yes; that is, I should have to leave England in about two years and a half."

"Well, then, there is no good in retiring till that period is expired. You may just as well draw your pay during that time as not."

"No," said Wykham, "I won't do poor John Company any more; if I don't mean to do any more work for him, I won't draw his pay either. However, it will take some time, I fancy; I wish, by the bye, you would see about my blood money."

"Your what?" said the man of peace with a slight shudder.

"Oh," said Wykham, laughing, "merely the compensation money for my wound. There is such a delay about these things, that I could not get it before I left India, though I had, and have still, my medical papers. I don't see why I should let John off that. My valuable blood is worth paying for."

"You had better do that through Radley, they understand those things best. I will speak to them; but take my advice and think better about retiring. Depend upon it, £1000 a-year is not so much as you think."

"It will do," said Wykham, laughing.

"Well, but then your profession; it is a great thing for a young man to have a profession."

"My dear Wilson, you waste your eloquence; nothing on earth would induce me to return to India."

"Ah," said the other drily, "I see."

"See what?"

"Oh! why I see that young men do not fly out at India all of a sudden, and go down and bury themselves in a northern wilderness for months together without meaning something by it."

"I tell you," replied Wykham, "I always flew out at India, as you call it, from the day I landed there; and as to what you irreverently call a wilderness, I went down to that lovely country, which even you, if you could see it, would admire with all the fervency that parchment and process may have left in you, to visit, according to promise, the family of one of my friends in India."

"Yes, yes, of course; your friend had sisters too, I presume. Ah, well; never mind: come and have some breakfast."

They walked into a room, the snug and even refined air of which bore witness that parchment and process had done less to ossify Mr. Wilson

than Wykham had chosen to suppose. There were some good prints on the walls, and a large collection of books on the shelves, amongst which Wykham observed a considerable sprinkling of the poets, contained mainly in those large single volumes which have of late years been such a blessing to the poor reading community, who cannot afford comfortable many-tomed editions. Neither the furniture of the room nor the plentiful and appetising array of the breakfast table corresponded with Wykham's crude, rough notions of the crabbed discomfort of a bachelor attorney. Mr. Wilson had been for many years solicitor to one Lady Prescot, and had for a yet longer period enjoyed a lucrative and honourable practice in his profession. Lady Prescot was Wykham's aunt; she had sold a large West India property, left to her as a young widow, by her husband, at a time when such property was saleable; and had invested the proceeds in securities nearer home, and, as it turned out, more profitable. She had never married again, though of course it was rumoured, and was indeed likely enough, that she had refused innumerable offers; but had sunk into a queer, eccentric, solitary way of living, which grew upon her till she liked to be as much unmolested as possible by all except her lady companion. She remained on good terms with Wyk-

ham's father, and had largely assisted him in his son's outfit, when Fred went to India, and at different times, though always in a strange roundabout way of her own. She approved very greatly of his going out; said it was very well that the boy should learn to do something for himself, and see the world; and the very day Fred was shipped, she, without saying anything to anybody, made her will, leaving him half her property, that is to say, £1000 a-year; and the other half to her companion. Neither Fred nor his parents had the slightest suspicion of the existence of any such arrangement till the day of her death, which occurred suddenly, just after Fred's return on furlough. She lived to hear of this event, and said something to the effect that she was "glad the boy was come back to comfort his parents, who were good folk who had never disturbed her, and had provided for their own children without seeming to depend on others; and that he must not go back again to the Indies." The next thing the Wykhams heard of her was that she was dead, and Fred her joint heir.

Fred had borne his change of circumstances with more philosophy than might have been expected from him: his first impulse was to laugh, and say it was very odd; he then laughed more heartily, as (with more trouble than the joke was

worth) he turned a large map of India, which adorned the room, with its face to the wall, in token of his renouncing all connection with that part of the globe; and lastly, sent for a cab and drove down to Gray's Inn, to ascertain from Mr. Wilson, the executor of the will, and an old friend of his father's — a friend, too, of his own boyish days — how matters really stood. Mr. Wilson received him with kindness and congratulations; told him that his money was in the 3½ per cents., talked a good deal of probates, administrations, and so on; and finally engaged that all should be concluded and settled, he, Mr. Wilson, being constituted agent, attorney, factotum, and what not, within the space of six weeks. Wykham was quite satisfied: he knew he was in good hands, but still he left the lawyer's chambers with a different feeling from that with which he had entered them. He did not feel quite so confident of being really a monied man. He had left England a mere boy, and had never been troubled in India with any other money transactions than drawing his monthly pay. The consequence was, that he knew a good deal more about cavalry movements than probates, and all lawyer terms and dealings seemed to him to invest things with a halo not only of distance but uncertainty. He therefore asked his father to say nothing to anybody about the change in his fortunes, which the old man, though he laughed at the rea-

sons assigned for making the request, readily agreed to; and himself set off for Leatheburn, where he observed the same silence, first, from a religious belief that it was quite a chance whether or not the lawyers allowed him to have his money, and afterwards, when he heard that it was all arranged, because he saw no good in talking about it: he was the last man in the world to boast, or indeed to feel proud of being rich. This will explain the footing on which Wykham found himself in the breakfast-room, with Mr. Wilson, in Montague Place. The latter tried once or twice to get at "the business" which had brought him up to town, but Fred only laughed, and declared that it was "a merely private personal matter," which it was quite clear he did not intend to say anything more about. He went after breakfast to Radley's reading-rooms, looked over the Indian papers, felt with wonder how long he had been mixed up with that strange, distant land, from which he now seemed separated for ever. The thought was impressive, but did not cost him much pain. Having studied the *Delhi Gazette* and *Lahore Chronicle* to his satisfaction, he went back to his hotel, had luncheon, and then drove down to the South-Western Station, and booked his place, for the reader will have perhaps guessed his destination before this — Winchester.

The fact was, that Wykham was quite deter-

mined to do all he could to allay the excitement which he found he had raised in Herby's mind; and having, as he told Mrs. Oakfield, "failed signally in correspondence," was now about to try the effect of a personal interview. He had concealed his intention, wishing not to raise hopes that would very probably be disappointed; he knew, also, that Mrs. Oakfield would have felt bound to protest against his making so long a journey for such a purpose, and thought it as well to avoid the friendly conflict. He reached Winchester at six in the evening; it was almost dark, so he took up his quarters for the night at the George; and about twelve the next morning walked up to St. Mary's. He asked the first boy he met wandering about in the college precincts, where Herbert Oakfield could be found.

"Oakfield!" said the youngster, dropping the christian name with great contempt, "Oh, I know; you must go over to Commoners."

"Oh, yes," said Wykham, unwilling to acknowledge his ignorance, for that boy evidently felt his superiority; "thank you; and where does Commoners live?"

This was almost too much for the boy, but he was polite, as public school-boys generally are; so swallowing down his intense enjoyment of the stranger's tremendous ignorance, he said, civilly,

"If you will come with me, I will find him out for you."

Wykham gladly assented, thinking himself only too lucky to get a guide in this *terra incognita;* he clung to him as his guardian angel, as they walked on amongst the wondering faces: a man never feels so *shy* as he does amongst boys.

"Here's Oakfield!" exclaimed the guide, suddenly. "Here, Oakfield!" he shouted.

Herby turned round, and, directly he saw Wykham, came running up.

"Halloa!" he exclaimed, "how do you do? how very glad I am to see you; when did you leave Leatheburn? where are you staying? when do you go? By Jove, how very glad I am to see you!"

Wykham shook hands with a warmth corresponding to such a greeting; it was as real a pleasure to him to see Herby, as to Herby to see him; not only because he liked the boy himself so much, but also because his face, amongst those strange groups, looked so friendly, so homelike, reminded him of Leatheburn and Margaret.

"I'll answer all your questions presently," he said, laughing; "there were about half-a-dozen, I think, in one sentence; but first you must go and get leave to come and spend the day with me; and also have the goodness to introduce me to my

guide, without whom I don't think I should ever have found you."

"Ruskin, senior," said Herby, "Mr. Wykham, —Mr. Wykham, Mr. Ruskin."

Ruskin was a good-looking young fellow, in Middle Part, some two years junior to Herby.

"Will you give me the pleasure of your company at dinner, at six o'clock to-night, at the George, together with Oakfield?"

Of course Ruskin would be too happy; would go home and get leave. So the two went off, and obtained the required permission.

"Well, then," said Wykham, "I'll just take an hour or so of your lions first, and then we'll go up to the George to luncheon."

So they all three went over the schools, the chapel, and cathedral, together. Herby's enjoyment of Wykham's mistake about Commoners was as intense as Ruskin could have wished. But they had plenty more of such mistakes to laugh at. Two Winchester fellows talking to a stranger in their own dialect are sure to have sufficient occasion to admire his utter discomfiture. Every minute Wykham had to stop and request to know the English of some such words as "Remedy," "Tugs," "Semper Socius," "Hills," &c. &c.

"Well," he said at last, in despair, "Hindustance is bad enough, but I'll be shot if Winchester doesn't

beat it; come along, Herby, let's go to luncheon, and for Heaven's sake talk English. Good morning," he added, bowing to Ruskin, "we shall see you at six o'clock."

As they walked arm in arm up the street towards the inn, they talked of Leatheburn. Wykham gave a minute account of the morning of his departure; of his stay there since Herbert left; of the walks, and of the flourishing condition of each individual member of the family when he had last seen them.

"I am going down there again very soon," Wykham said.

"Are you?" said poor Herby, mournfully, "I wish I was."

It would have been hard to say which of the two most enjoyed talking on this subject.

"Well now, Herby," Wykham began, as they sat opposite each other at the well-spread table in the coffee room of the George "(you mustn't mind my calling you by your christian name, it comes most natural; you know I'm used to do it with your brother: you may call me Fred, if you like), I'll tell you candidly what I came down to Winchester for. In the first place it was to see you."

"I'm sure I am very much obliged to you."

"No, I don't know that you will be, when I tell you why I particularly wanted to see you, though

I dare say you more than half guess. You remember what I wrote to you about?"

Herby nodded.

"Well, I can't bear to think that my having made a fool of myself should lead you to do the same. I beg your pardon, Herby, but upon my honour, I couldn't call a fellow anything else, who in your position was to go to India."

"It wouldn't follow that he should be one though," rejoined Herby, rather drily.

"Well, that's true too, and yet, my good fellow, what is there to tempt you? I talked like an ass about Mooltan, and no good came of it, as no good, I believe, ever does come of bragging. I don't wonder at a fellow of your age getting excited at hearing of campaigns and so on, they do excite all of us; but remember it is not certain that you see service because you go to India. Pass me the beer, Herby. Lots of men," he resumed, after an interview with the tankard, "have been thirty years in India, and never seen a shot fired, and now the knowing ones say there is to be no more fighting for I don't know how many years. Besides, if you do get one campaign in your first ten years' service, and are not knocked over, still there are nine dreary years of cantonment, dull, hot, uncomfortable vegetation. I dare say you would like the fighting part of the business well enough, but I am perfectly certain you would

hate all the rest. I think I see you on a hot dusty day, after having been four or five years in the country, confined to the house, too sick to read, thinking of home, and wondering what on earth induced you to leave it."

"People leave home every day," urged Herby, rather staggered.

"They do; and how much they like it! You see, a man ten thousand miles off can't come back the first fine morning he wants to; he very soon finds he has got a bad bargain, but also one which he must stick to; and so, because he stays where he is, and is too much of a man to howl and complain, ashamed too to seem to regret his own act, people think, or pretend to think, that he is very happy, and so on. I tell you, Herby, you would hate India; everybody does. The best men, such as your own brother, who work hard, and, as it is said, *get on*, hate it; idle good-for-nothing dogs like myself hate it. Perhaps the worst like it best; they can get drunk there, and that is about all they want: but even they hate a country where beer and wine are expensive."

"But," said Herby, changing his ground, "what am I to do in England?"

"Why, Herby, the first answer to that, I should think, is that you should do well at Winchester and the University."

"Ugh!" said Herby, with a look of great dis-

gust. This was, of all others, the very most unpalatable proposition to him.

Wykham was puzzled; he had not been used to this style of argument; he did the wisest thing he could under the circumstances, followed his own instinct, guided by a sincere desire to say the right thing: he knew it was no good to assure a person that he did like that which he himself said he did not.

"Well, old fellow, I have no doubt your work is irksome to you, and the prospect of it still more so; and I believe I ought to sympathise with you as much as anybody, for I remember how I hated that Latin and Greek work myself; only, Herby, I never got so far as you have, so that it was less interesting to me than it must be to you. However, observe what was the consequence in my case. I threw it all up, and went to India, thinking I should have nothing to do; that lies at the bottom of all our fine talk about change of duties, active employment, and so on: eh, Herby?"

Herby blushed, but said nothing.

"Well, I went to India, and, before a year was out, I would have been glad to be at Homer and Virgil again for twelve hours out of the twenty-four, if only I could have got back. Oh, Herby, what a fool I did think myself! A whole school day here may be a nuisance, but depend upon it,

my boy, it is a very seventh heaven of enjoyment compared to a long succession of whole days of hot vacant idleness in India."

The boy looked unpersuaded still; he had not much to say; he felt the cogent force of Wykham's candour, but the hope of relief from the tedium of work by a revolution of scene and occupation, had taken too strong a hold upon him to be relinquished without a struggle.

"You would advise me, then," he said, "to make up my mind to go plodding on for some six or seven more dreary dreary years, at work which I detest?"

His face looked the very picture of dismay as he said this, in a most dismal tone: but Wykham was glad to find that he thus tacitly consented to the matter being put on its real merits.

"Well, Herby, it *is* very horrid; and, as I said, I have no right to preach. But really you will find something horrid in your work everywhere. That is what Ned would tell you. He has found his duty harder in India than he did at Oxford; and then remember that he went through his Winchester and Oxford work first. That is the great point. If you really feel that an active life (if you *will* continue so to call one of the most inactive careers which a young man can possibly enter upon) is best suited for you, then you know best,

and have a right to act for yourself just as much as anybody else: but what are you to do for the next four years? Edward was twenty-one, you know, when he went out."

"I need not go out as old as that."

"Heaven forbid, my dear fellow, you should go much earlier. Come, Herby, make a compromise; make up your mind to go through your school and university career first, on the understanding that you reserve a perfect right to do all you can, and that your friends shall help you, after that. I will undertake that my father shall get you an appointment after you have taken your degree: though I tell you candidly I am perfectly certain that *then* you will not care much to make me keep my promise."

"Six years' drudgery," said Herby, shaking his head slowly.

"No! not six years; depend upon it, that before a year is over this fit will pass. The great difficulty is to believe that. I hate talking like this, Herby," he said, getting up; "it is so easy to talk, and I know well enough so confoundedly hard to act. I feel for you, my dear boy; I do, upon my word. I know that when one has taken it into one's head to come to a halt and rest, it is awful pain to make the effort, and resolve to pass by the tempting place and go on. But I do

believe, indeed, that your life's happiness depends upon it. I declare it makes me wretched to think of your going out to India and hating me all your life, as you must and would, as having been the first person who put it into your head. Just think of your home, Herby," continued Wykham, with an unconscious skill, opening his heaviest battery last. "Wait six years; not dreary ones, believe me; once make the effort, horrid I know, but make it, and the dreariness will all be over, and your mother would no more oppose you, or rather no more try to dissuade you (you know as well as I do that she would never think of *opposing* you *now*) than she did Ned. You owe her a good deal, my boy; you do really; you would hate yourself were you to break up and throw unhappiness into that home of yours; the best and the happiest, and by heaven the most beautiful, that I ever saw, or heard, or dreamt of. Ah!" he added, moderating the tone of extraordinary energy into which he had warmed, "I see you give in! come to terms, old fellow, eh? Treaty agreed to, signed and sealed at this blessed George Inn, 10th of March, 1850: hurrah!" And Wykham sank back into his chair, that moustached dragoon as pleased as a child, and very nearly doing what his companion was doing, for it was the twinkle in Herby's eye that had made him claim the victory.

The boy walked to the other end of the room, busying himself with the pretence of looking out for pen, ink, and paper, at the writing table. Wykham took the hint.

"What," he said, "you mean to put the treaty on paper, eh? write a letter to Leatheburn, — is that it? A very good idea too, Herby; I only wish I might be there to see them get the letter."

Herby had not had any such thought or intention; but he would not say so, and sat down to write.

"George Inn, Winchester.

"My Dearest Mother,

"I am spending the day at the Inn here, with Mr. Wykham, who came this morning. He has been advising me very strongly to give up the idea of India, at all events for the present; so I will say no more about it till I leave Winchester, at any rate, and that will be two years; though I do not at all think that he is right in saying that by that time I shall have got reconciled to this abominable, stupid, useless Latin and Greek; to which, however, I shall now go back as before, and work as well as I can. I postpone the Indian plan, but I tell you candidly, that you will find me less fickle about it than you may expect. However, I will say nothing about that, and for two years, at any rate, will victimise myself.

"I am, &c."

He went and showed this to Wykham, who was delighted. He knew that Herbert would keep his word, and the assurances of an unchangeable purpose he inwardly estimated at no more than they were worth.

"And now, Herby," he said, "tell me one thing more: you are not offended with me? you don't think I have been meddling with what is no business of mine?"

Herby smiled, shook his own head and his friend's hand, by way of answer.

"But," he asked, "I want also to know one thing; if you hate India so much, how do you like the thought of going back yourself?"

How glad Wykham was to have the wherewithal to allay the not unnatural suspicion implied in this question!

"Going back? I'm never going back, my dear fellow."

"What, never?"

"Never no more; I'm a gentleman at large, Herby, and mean to live at home at ease; and so you see, I, an idle dog, with nothing to do, am preaching work and duty and I don't know what, all to you. Cool, isn't it? But I want you to grant me one favour, Herby, and that is not to post that letter of yours."

"What, not send the treaty?"

"No, no, I didn't say that;—send it? I should think so; but do let me have the very great pleasure of being the bearer of it."

"Why, are you going back again?"

"I hope to start to-morrow, and if I am the bearer of an express, shall, of course, travel day and night in the correct express style."

"But did you come all the way from Leatheburn to see me about this?" asked Herby, in a tone of surprise, as the truth dawned upon him.

"Of course I did; why not? I like knocking about; that is in England, not in India, Herby."

Herbert felt touched, and perhaps flattered, at the thought of Wykham's having made such an exertion on his account. It gave, too, a dignity to his scheme, an enhancement to the value of his present sacrifice, which pleased him.

"Of course," he said, "I shall be very glad if you will take the letter; I only wish I could come myself."

"I wish you could, too: well, what o'clock is it? Four;—how we have been talking!"

Herby went off to dress for dinner, promising to return, with Ruskin, at six. Wykham went to stroll by the banks of the Itchen, and feast upon the thoughts of the pleasure he should convey to the party at Leatheburn.

"He is a fine fellow," he thought to himself: "I

wish I could resign my fancies to my duty as bravely as he does. How pleased Ned will be when he hears it all! I have taken a leaf out of his sermon book, I think; I had no idea I could preach so; after all the man who said he didn't know whether he could play the fiddle or not because he had never tried, was right: we do not know what we can do till we try, I declare."

The next day Wykham left Winchester, travelled all night from London, and reached Leatheburn soon after the dawn of a chill Sunday morning, the fifth day after he had quitted it. His history was soon told, and afforded all the pleasure he could have expected, earned for him more gratitude than he thought he deserved.

A letter was received from Herby himself the next morning, in which he confirmed all that Wykham had said, but solaced himself by clinging to the prospect of reviving the scheme, which he now consented to lay aside, in two years' time.

"But that's all humbug, you know," Wykham said, "by the time two years, or two months, are gone, he'll think no more of India than he did six months ago."

And so it proved. It cost the poor boy a hard struggle to wrench himself back to his work, but having done so forcibly in spite of his inclination, his inclination gave in and meekly followed his

will; he had arrived at that period when a classical education assumes a different aspect; when drudgery gives place to science; the painful acquiring of the rudiments of a dead language, to the animated study of an immortal literature. No more complaints were made of idleness; and with this, the restless distaste for discipline disappeared also; so that by the end of the half-year, the second master even ventured to hint at, as already looming in the distance, that most perfect consummation of a Tutor's hope, a first class at Oxford.

"All very well," muttered Fred, when he heard this,—"a capital thing, I've no doubt, but I've a notion that Herby did something harder than a first class that afternoon when he came to the George."

But we are anticipating; this was not till July; and how came Wykham to be at Leatheburn again then? It may serve to explain this, if we go back to the end of March, and follow the course of one of the customary afternoon walks. The party, consisting originally of Mrs. Vernon and her two daughters, Wykham, Margaret, Rose, and Mary, went skirting the hill above the house for two or three miles, till they emerged near the top of that Dunmail Raise, which has been so often alluded to. But here a misfortune befell

poor little Edith Vernon, productive of more important consequences than often follow upon a child's becoming lame from walking with a stone in her shoe; the stone was taken out, but the tramping along the hard highway was too much for Edith, who had thought nothing of the pain so long as she could run about in the woods with Rose and Mary and her sister; she sat down and begged piteously to be taken home. Margaret was for returning at once, but Mrs. Vernon declared it would be a great pity to lose so beautiful an afternoon (there was the first light flush of pale green visible everywhere in the larch wood), that she would take Edith home while the others continued their walk; this suggestion was clamourously supported by the other children; and the scamp, Fred, said with a compassionate gravity, that it would be hard upon the poor little girls to lose their walk, and so Mrs. Vernon and Edith went one way, and the rest of the party another. Thus Wykham and Margaret were left, as it were, alone; and their situation had something of embarrassment in it, partly from its novelty, partly from the fact that the feelings of both with regard to each other had, during the last few weeks, undergone a change unperceived in its process, only perceived now in its maturity; like the growth of a child, or the coming out of

the stars; that stealthy development so beautifully described by Keble:—

"Who ever saw the earliest rose
First open her sweet breast?
Or when the summer sun goes down,
The first soft star in evening's crown,
Light up her gleaming crest?

"Fondly we seek the dawning bloom
On features wan and fair,—
The gazing eye no change can trace;
But look away a little space—
Then turn, and lo! 'tis there." *

Under such circumstances it is a convenience to have a subject of conversation ready made, that shall turn up as naturally as the weather, and yet be more interesting. Edward was this convenient subject and was certainly used most unsparingly, being lugged in unceremoniously at all times and in all seasons, yet with an ever fresh interest.

"I wonder what your brother is doing just now, Miss Oakfield; perhaps just going to his work, at Lahore, poor fellow!"

"Poor fellow, indeed," said Margaret; "I do dread the next hot season for him: has the very hot weather commenced yet?"

"Why, let me see: the 30th of March; no, not in the Punjab; it is bearable still, but will continue to get worse till about the 1st of May, when, if it

* Christian Year, Fourth Sunday in Lent.

was to get hotter still, the universe must crack bodily."

"There is no place in the world," said Margaret, looking round, "which I associate with Edward as much as this."

They had reached the top of the hill, and were come to the short stretch of level ground that connects the two sides of the pass: they sat down among the rocks to look down upon the valley below. The children soon left them to play in the stream, and so Wykham and Margaret were left alone.

"Indeed," said Wykham; "may I ask why?"

"These stones," she answered, smiling, "were fateful to him."

"How so?"

"It was here, Mr. Wykham, just where we are now sitting, that he determined to go to India."

"Indeed," said Wykham, with marked attention, as though wishing to hear more; "and were you with him?"

"Oh no; he told me of it afterwards (on this same road, though), but on this occasion he was alone. It was nearly six years ago, on the 25th September, that he was sitting here alone for nearly two hours, revolving his destiny, as he said. He told me quite casually, but it struck me greatly at the time, and I have often and often thought of it since."

"I do not wonder," rejoined Wykham; "it is so seldom that a man can trace any important change in his life to one particular act of deliberate reflection; and when he can, it is indeed very striking; it has the same sort of interest, and in a far higher degree, as watching the source of a large river. Well," he added, looking round him, "he had a glorious temple wherein to think; a resolution made among these hills and rocks, and by that pure stream, ought to have been noble and pure and lofty."

"So I often think," said Margaret, "and so I am sure it was. I believe I half tried to dissuade him at the time, but I have been glad since that he did not listen to me; poor dear Edward!"

"You think, then, that his going to India was no mistake; that he has been successful there?"

"You ought to answer that question, Mr. Wykham, instead of asking it."

"Well, I was thinking what he would say himself. It is difficult to tell, now that he has entered upon so different a course of life out there, but formerly I doubt whether he did not often wish himself back again; I used often to think, Miss Oakfield, and that before I was much in the habit of thinking about any thing, that your brother had to contend against a continual sense of disappointment: I do not mean that he did not like the

country; he used to own that, as a thing to be laughed at, and of no great consequence; but I had always a vague notion that he had a much deeper sorrow than this."

Margaret had been listening with eagerness; seeing that she made no answer, Wykham continued,—

"I don't mean that there was any morbid melancholy about him: a tendency this way he had, I know; he has told me so himself more lately; but one which he always resisted, and has, I think, completely overcome: it seems more as though he were oppressed by the seriousness of life, and harassed by an anxious desire to do right, which leaves its mark upon his countenance when he does not know it."

"Yes, yes, I can conceive all you say, very well; pray go on."

"Well, I remember this impressed me when I first knew him; I met him at Meerut, four years ago, dining with Stanton, a mutual and very dear friend of ours."

"I know."

"Well, I knew he was a griff (you know what that is, fresh in the country), and was prepared to look down upon him accordingly,—though he was very nearly my own age,—by virtue of my six years' seniority in the service; but I found out,

before dinner was over, that the looking down must be the other way, if at all. I did not see much of him then, but I liked him, and I think he liked me; in fact, I know he did, for we corresponded, from the very beginning, like old friends. I was a good deal more light-headed then than I am now, though I dare say you will find it hard to believe that, Miss Oakfield; and I have wondered since what it was that made us such friends. Stanton used to growl, and make uncivil observations about it, for I think it puzzled him too; however, friends we were. Well, then followed his court-martial troubles, which I was telling you about the other day, and then at last we came fairly in contact. I could not agree with him then as I do now, but I still admired him, and had a sneaking consciousness that he was right. I heard him abused, for the thing was a good deal talked about, and sometimes I had horrid misgivings about him, which I hate myself now when I think of. On the whole, though, I am glad to remember that I believed and maintained before others that he was not afraid, or anything of that sort; but I believe I made concessions of principle on the other side, which he would have thought worse than my letting him be called a coward. I declare to you, Miss Oakfield, I could be a child when I think of his letters to me at that time in answer

to mine, which were, I dare say, suspicious, half-unkind, half-insolent. Harassed as he was, and conscious of his own courage, so superior to that of all of us put together, he used to write long volumes to me in his own justification, arguing the matter fairly, and gently, and quietly, while I know that to others, who he thought had no right to his confidence, he never condescended to utter a syllable. I loved him more than ever for those letters. Stanton, whom I also corresponded with, and to whom I dare say I expressed some of my insolent doubts, who stood by your brother through the whole business like a lion, rated me soundly: I loved Stanton for this too; but the contrast between his letters and Ned's made the latter all the more striking to me. By the time the trial was over, I was quite established in the opinion, which I have held ever since, that Oakfield's conduct was not only manful, but most soldier-like, and I have liked the service the less ever since, for the way it treated him. Very soon after, he came to live with me at Simla, and then began an epoch in my life as important to me as that hour upon these stones was to him. But," he said abruptly, "I am going off to my own history, I find, which I fear you will not find so interesting."

Margaret did not answer; but something in her manner must have encouraged him, for he resumed,—

"We lived together, and still in our old way; we never talked on any subject of great importance: I dare say you would be surprised did you know how light the tone of our conversation generally was; and yet I sometimes thought I was more impressed by his levity than other men's seriousness. The fact is, levity was not the word; we had, I think, I am sure he had, a continual consciousness of the existence of deeper interests and sympathies, though shyness or awkwardness, call it what you please, prevented us from making any direct allusion to these, till one evening (how well I remember it!) something happened which opened up afresh the old story of his court-martial, and then we were led on till we became engaged in the very most vital questions of life; and then how his earnestness seemed to overflow! I am sure he did not know, I hardly knew myself at the time, how impressed I was by what passed between us then: I had been used to the ordinary notions of religion, that it was a dry painful business, though perhaps necessary, quite detached from the ordinary duties and amusements of life, the special property of Sundays, death-beds, and parsons; you may conceive, then, that it was a very gospel to me, to have that which I had a consciousness I ought not to be without, stripped of the narrow limits which had made it appear stupid,

if not odious: my whole being awoke, I think, at that time; people talk of conversions, and so on; it is often great folly, I dare say; but there are undoubtedly points in the lives of some of us, which can be at once fixed upon as vitally critical. The change from boyishness to manliness comes sooner or later, at very different times, and in very different ways; to some so gradually that its progress is not perceptible; to others again suddenly, as visible as if accompanied by a tongue of fire or a rushing mighty wind. I think that this conversation which I have been speaking of was such a crisis to me; I was older than your brother, but then for the first time seemed to put away childish things. We parted soon afterwards, and during the campaign were separated; but the sting of our intercourse remained with me, and often during the march and on the picket, and afterwards on a bed of wakeful pain and sickness, his image was with me, and another image more startling, more impressive, more welcome, —that of myself, of my own long latent being. It is wonderful to wake from the sleep that bounds us in, to an hour or a minute of self-consciousness. Well, we met again at Lahore, and again lived together at Simla, and took up our intercourse, so to speak, at the point where we had left it. I went back to school, a dear schoolmaster,

Miss Oakfield, you can easily believe" (Margaret looked quite as if she could), "and I think we helped in those few months to educate each other. But I owe him an obligation which I can never repay; it was not that he was the first who ever spoke to me of these things; a clergyman, or an uncle, or any one in authority over me, might have preached to me for weeks, and it would, I doubt not, have gone in at one ear and out at the other. I should have thought it very right and proper, and natural for them to speak so, and should have received their good advice in so many set lectures, as I should take a prescription from a doctor, and think about one as much as the other an hour afterwards. But you may imagine how different a thing it was when I found my teacher in a friend, a companion, a brother officer, my junior in years, whom I was first attracted to by a natural liking; when we only came to talk of these things, because they had a deep interest for us both, which interest he had perhaps communicated to me without my knowing it, or rather not communicated it, but roused what was already dormant in my own nature;—when we learnt to talk of religion, and to begin to think of it as a matter of Monday and Tuesday, and the ride and the parade, as much as Sunday and the church and the sermon; when, in short, I began

to feel that God was not an unpleasant terrible shadow, only restraining me by a vague terror from doing many pleasant things, but a God who, as he made, so alone gives meaning to existence, to the natural world, to friendship, to love, to man."

He stopped, and they both sat silent for a few moments, encouraging the idea so suggested. An idea of wonderful power! To dissolve and to unite; to dissolve all seeming differences and barriers, and to unite in very closest intimacy of being. When two souls, though it be for a moment, look out together upon God's works and feel that they are his, for that instant at any rate the mysterious earthborn divisions melt away, and a complete, primitive, yet more mysterious unity once again exists; those two souls, while such a vision lasts, are, in very deed, one. A ringing laugh from one of the little girls, playing in the brook close by, broke the reverie, and Wykham descended to earth again, but still a fairy-like half-visionary earth: the afternoon sun shone above them with more than the warmth of spring; the pale blue sky, with the white clouds sailing under it, seemed to beckon them on into infinite visions; the babbling stream danced by them with a mirth worthy of the gods; the sleepy motions of the happy sheep as they

grazed upon the mountain turf were the only dull signs of animal life that served to give a quiet reality to what else had been almost too ideal; except when, from time to time, the laughing shouts of the tiny masons, so busily employed in obstructing the passage of the dashing sparkling waters, peopled this lover's paradise with images of human affection and domestic joy. With a long sigh to relieve his almost oppressive sense of happiness, Wykham continued his history, all old to the reader, but, if not new, most deeply interesting to Margaret.

"We parted, as I told you, on the 15th of October, at Ferozepore; it was not without more emotion than perhaps he thought me capable of, that I saw him left alone, while Stanton went off to his new domestic life,—I to my home in that England which was so seldom out of his thoughts. Poor Ned! as I said before, Miss Oakfield, his life the last five years has been more brave than happy. I thought of all our intercourse; I had a strong consciousness of what he had been to me, but I hated a scene, and so did he; I only said 'thank you;' a sufficiently compressed epitome of all and more than all that I have now been saying to you, — I don't know whether he understood it, —and I came away. There;—I meant to give you your brother's history, Miss Oakfield, and

with the cunning of egotism I have run off into my own."

"Thank you," said Margaret; and as she looked up, there was a diamond sparkle in her soft brown eye that set Wykham's soul on fire.

"And do you think," he began again, in a tone in which sadness had given place to vehement energy, "that my obligations ended there? Oh, Miss Oakfield, who knows as well as you that they had but hardly begun? Poor Ned! he little thought that when he next saw me, I should no longer be able to give him the first and highest love of my heart, as indeed I did before. Oh, indeed, if ever he taught me anything,—if my soul has awaked from her long slumber,—if I have gone through the discipline of pain, of suffering, of discomfort,—it was for this hour; that through such teaching I might bring to you a love, pure, earnest — oh, Margaret, so deep and true, that I dare not use even the language of flattery to call it unworthy of you. My love *is* worthy, Margaret: it has seen God and lived. I never knew till a few minutes ago, when I looked round upon this lovely scene, and felt how present God is, how infinite, —how eternally rooted my love for you is;— Margaret!"—

He stopped, for poor Margaret's diamond sparkles had swollen into a flood; and the tears, as she held her hands before her eyes, were

escaping through her small white fingers. Surely she is not weeping for grief: so thought her lover: he took one of those small hands in his own, and drew it gently and unopposed away from that beautiful countenance, which its fellow now only half concealed.

"Margaret," he almost whispered, "you will finish Edward's lesson; you will be my teacher, my rich blessing, my own, my beloved companion, support, and comforter."

The other hand was withdrawn, and in that upturned face, smiling through tears, he read that answer which prompted him to draw her gently to himself, and imprint the first long, loving, earnest kiss of deep and pure affection upon the lips of his affianced wife.

* * * * *

The sun had set when they entered the garden, but the quick eyes of Mrs. Oakfield, who met them, detected the traces of excitement in her daughter's appearance.

"Margaret, love, you look pale, you have been walking too far."

"No, mother," she said, "I think not; oh, my mother," she added, "let me come to you."

She put her arms round her mother's neck, and hung there like a little child. Wykham, like a sensible man, walked on and entered the house.

CHAP. VII.

"A feeling of sadness comes o'er me
That my soul cannot resist.

A feeling of sadness and longing,
That is not akin to pain,
And resembles sorrow only
As the mist resembles rain."

LONGFELLOW.

"THIS is delightful!" exclaimed Edward Oakfield, as he sat down to his solitary dinner, in his small quarters at Lahore, with an unopened English letter before him. "He was a wise man who said 'Sweet is pleasure after pain,' though the pain is severe, it must be owned."

It was the beginning of the burning month of May, and he had spent most of the day in the still more burning atmosphere of cutcherry, engaged in the arduous work of labouring to administer justice in a language with which his ear and tongue were not yet familiar. The overland letters had come in about twelve o'clock; he could not resist the temptation to read that from Leatheburn; he tore it open, and it is to be feared that for the next quarter of an hour the interesting civil action of

Dinah *versus* Rhowany Doss (in which the plaintiff sued the defendant for an old debt of five rupees four annas, each party bringing an army of witnesses, who swore stoutly, on their respective sides, to facts diametrically opposite; not content with a single perjury, but, after the custom of Hindoos, calling heaven and earth and all manner of redundant witnesses to attest their unblushing lie) did not meet with the attention which it deserved. He laid down the letter, when read, with a sigh. "When will the next mail be in?" was his first thought; "now, shall I read Wykham's letter, or keep it till the evening?" The question seemed a hard one; he handled the letter, looked at the post-mark, and seemed on the point of opening it, when, with a sudden effort, he put it in his pocket, and turned with a perfect rush of attention to the perjured liar who was giving his evidence. But in the evening virtue was rewarded, when the busy work of the day was over, rid of the crowd that had beset him for so many hours, almost faint from long fasting, he sat down in his own quiet room to his comfortable dinner, with Wykham's long unread letter on one side, and, by way of reserve, a volume of Carlyle on the other. But when he had read the letter, containing a long account of Herby's Indian freak, and Wykham's successful journey to Winchester, he did not take up the book, but sat thinking for a long time, then

ordered the things to be taken away, got his paper-case, and wrote the following letter to Wykham in answer: —

"Lahore, May 5th, 1850.

"My dear Fred,

"I received, by to-day's mail, your long letter, written from Leatheburn, telling me about poor Herby's wish to come out here. One never answers a letter so fully and graphically as when we sit down within five minutes of reading it, so I mean to try this plan now, for indeed you deserve to be well answered. Dinner is just over; you may easily fancy me in one of these small Annerkullee houses, sitting at my old camp table which has gone all over India with me, with a book at each corner of my paper, to prevent its being blown away by the punkah, and your letter, with that dear Leatheburn postmark, before me.

In the first place let me thank you, my dear Fred, most heartily, for your very kind and wise treatment of poor Herby. Indeed it would be a sad disappointment to me if he were to come out here; one of a family is enough for this place of torment: speaking seriously, you know how often we have agreed that for one man whose character is refined and strengthened by the fiery furnace of Indian temptation, there are ten who are carried away, withered up, and destroyed by it. It is a risk to which I never wish to see kith or kin of mine exposed. You hint mysteriously at some change in your own fortunes, which may prevent your coming out again. Is this a real probability, or

only one of the thoughts which the wish of all men on their first return home so plentifully generates? If the former, India is likely to become a howling wilderness to me; for Middleton talks of going home for good. He has only been sixteen years in the country, but has lived carefully, and has also, since his father's death, had some money of his own. I think he has some idea of trying to get into Parliament. In that case Stanton alone will be left: a host in himself you say, and you are right, though neither he nor Middleton can make up to me, dear Fred, for losing you. You will be curious to know how I and my Assistant Commissionership get on, now that we have had a little more experience of each other than when you and I parted on the 15th October. I hardly know what to say. I like it better than I expected, or rather dislike it less. The actual routine, which I thought would be so very difficult, has become easy, as you assured me it would, as all routines do, though it is hard to believe they will when contemplated from the distance of utter ignorance. The language was my great difficulty, is still, and I think always will be. I don't mean to say that I am worse off than my neighbours in this respect, but I think *they* are worse off than they often allow. I am sure that there are very few men to whom a foreign language, however familiar from study and experience, becomes as complete a servant as their own, as for judicial purposes is so desirable. There are shades of meaning which we often lose, not so much in hearing as in speaking, by that cowardly instinct which makes us substitute

a feeble but familiar, for a more vigorous and obscure word. I do not wish to exaggerate the importance of this. Eloquence is by no means an essential attribute to a judge, but it is always a most effective adjunct, especially with Asiatics; and there are very few Europeans, even amongst those who are justly called excellent linguists, who can be really eloquent in Ordoo or Persian; they must think too much of their instrument for the effect to be very great. But, on the whole, I dislike the work less than I expected; and the actual labour I feel, as I knew I should, most beneficial; not for my health perhaps, which is never good, and sometimes very bad (you need not mention this at Leatheburn), but to my intellect certainly, which seems to work better and more freely at all points for having so much heavier a strain upon it. And the method and regularity which business necessitates are always a wholesome check to my indolent nature. Then on the other hand, there is the Charybdis which we are apt to run upon while steering clear of Scylla; the danger of becoming a mere machine; of becoming a 'first-rate officer,' as it is called, and ceasing to be a man. I am sometimes startled to find how full my whole mind and imagination become of my business, and then the spirit of the world is ever at hand to infect all with his blighting curse. In this difficulty you may understand how I have learnt to value the Sunday, a day when I try completely to give myself up to the ideal, that is, the only real; and shun, as profane, every thought of the material and the actual. I once used to talk very un-

wisely about the Sunday; I am now, no more than then, a fourth commandment man, but I do most heartily admire and acknowledge the wisdom of a day of rest. Even now Sunday draughts of ether can scarcely counteract weekly contact with a grosser atmosphere; one day of Wordsworth, or Shakespeare, or that other greater book than all, — of quiet thought upon the wonders that are above, beneath, and on every side, — of life and death, — of God and the soul, — can hardly give that firm faith which shall resist six days of sapping intercourse with the world, — shall impart the liberty of infinite truth to those most finite details which are else so apt to degenerate into bondage. You will not think that I mean we should take in enough religion on Sundays to last through the week, like a steam-engine getting supplies of water to carry it on to the next station, but I am sure that in life, where so much of our time is necessarily given up to dealings with the most common-place present, to hearing merely worldly interests insisted upon with all the importance of officiality, it is very necessary (at least to those who do not feel their faith far stronger than is the position of most of us) to have set and frequent periods wherein to shake ourselves, to open our eyes, and see how things really do stand; that the justice, which we do well to be so busily engaged with all the week, is still in itself but a poor and gross emblem of that eternal truth and justice with which it is too often our monstrous error to confound it. I am certain that all this is of great practical importance, though it may perhaps sound vague and mystical.

The effect of mistaking a lower for a higher good is very sadly visible in all our Indian government. The lower good is so much higher than the highest of many other governments, that we may be thankful even for this; I do believe that there are few, if any, governments in the world so vigorous, and yet (in the common sense of the term) so just and so liberal as that of the East India Company; and yet few or none in so bad a way. Stanton would abuse me for being paradoxical; but I may indulge myself with you who are at a safe distance, and more courteous withal than our beloved bear. What I am going to say may be a humbug, but it has the merit of being, at any rate, a well-digested, deliberately-believed humbug. The Indian government seems to me to be in a less hopeful and promising condition than any other, because, while its practice is perhaps better, its principles are worse. In most civilised countries there is, generally at least, a partially recognised idea of the higher and spiritual ends in government, in human life, whether social or individual. And this is what I call the higher truth, as distinguished from that lower one which our government in this country seems alone to recognise. In practice most states fall below even the lower good; but, for the most part, the profession of belief in something higher than protection to life and property and revenue collection, is acknowledged amongst them; and even this is something. But we in India have not this. Those *beaver tendencies* which Carlyle speaks of as characterising Englishmen of the present day, are not only followed too far in our

practice, but, as it would seem, their perfection is our highest idea. Our government is purely secular; and thus, while there can be no doubt of the very great relief which British rule has given to this country, though it is certain that there is a growing desire to treat the natives well, to improve the country physically, to improve the courts of justice, and so on; and though I fully admit that these are great blessings (a great deal more than can be said for most governments), yet I maintain that, to a government that has no higher idea than all this, the words 'great' or 'noble' are misapplied. There is an utter want of nobleness in the government of India; it still retains the mark of its commercial origin; we see every year, in England, the evils of a merely commercial spirit, developing themselves in selfishness, in coarseness, in cowardly shrinking from brave endurance. In England this is partly counteracted by other influences; but here it is counteracted by nothing but the good which undoubtedly is contained, together with the evil, in itself. The good, as has been said a thousand times, is great; it consists in vigour, force, energy, a terrestrial justice, infinitely better than lawless rapine and a politic benevolence; but the evil, though less talked about, is great also, and no less certainly exists. The evil is a money-getting earthly mind, that dares to view a large portion of God's world, and many millions of God's creatures, as a more or less profitable investment, as a good return for money laid out upon them, as a providential asylum for younger sons. It is curious to observe how this commercial spirit, so pre-

dominant in Anglo-India in the aggregate, manifests itself in the component individuals. Here of course there are exceptions; but the tendency sets all this way. Take the majority of officials in this country: their vigour, their strong sense, their prompt and business-like dexterity, have earned for them, as a class, a justly honourable distinction. These are what may be called the commercial virtues. But except good men of business what are they? Many of the most famous men in India, now and in former days, have had none but an official life; good and honest and intelligent men of business; but alas! when I add to this, devout, godly, reverent servants of Heaven, are you not almost inclined to smile? The Indian government is perhaps the best, the most perfect, nay, perhaps, the only specimen of pure professing secularism that the civilised world has ever seen since the Christian era; and sometimes, when our eyes are open to see things as they are, such a secularism does appear a most monstrous phenomenon to be stalking through God's world, not the less so that it happened to have four legs to go upon. It is not missionaries that we want to remedy this state of things. Secularism is ever ready to pay missionaries to any amount, and then complacently to button up its breeches pocket, and go on its way rejoicing. But you may land fleet-loads of missionaries at Calcutta, and they will pass innocently through the length and breadth of the land, having about as much influence with the Europeans as the natives, than which a more utter negation of all quantity can hardly be conceived. No amount of

orthodox Sunday services will break the force of the spirit of commerce; indeed, this apparatus dares not attack that which is the real enemy; but goes off to a hundred other merely fancied ones, enemies of straw, which it may set up, and have the fun of knocking down again, to all eternity, and take nothing by the motion; the truth must come to us by other channels; our great hope, I do believe, is the spirit which seems quite lately to have gone abroad in Europe, and especially in England, where poetry and philosophy do seem to be once more beginning to assert themselves in opposition to mere selfish covetousness, and where good men appear to be learning to venture to call things by their real names, and to look what God makes in the face, and receive it as it is, instead of trying to square it away to some orthodox preconceived pattern of their own. When this spirit of philosophy, and poetry, and godliness shall move across the world, and begin to dawn even upon the Englishmen in the East, — when the philosophical reformer shall come out here as Governor-General, — then the spirit of Mammon may tremble for its empire, but not till then. We have seen in France the evil of a professed regard for abstract ideas magnified into idolatry, an idolatry, false of course, and ruinous in its effects; but its opposite, which is the sin of this country, cannot be considered much better; nay, even more degraded, if one species of idolatry can be a more degraded lie than another. You have no notion how seducing this influence, on every side, is. It becomes

necessary to force myself to repeat continually the commonest facts, that God made and makes the world, —Asia as well as Europe,—that I and all men, black as well as white, have immortal souls, and also bodies, that will die in some thirty or forty years; or else the cutcherry work would soon degenerate into a gross and degrading mechanism.

"My Deputy Commissioner is a very pleasant agreeable man, and few could be better able, I fancy, to teach me the necessary rudiments; but of course I wish sometimes that I could have been at Ferozepore, under Middleton, the only man I think I have seen in the country to whom I could really look up. Does this sound like conceit? I am so certain that it is *not*, that I have no scruple in saying it. I have met with many men in this country, far better and more self-denying in their practice than I am, and I have met with very many whom I know perfectly well are far cleverer men than I am, more able to do things, quicker, more ready, more ingenious, more energetic. But I really cannot call to mind any man except Middleton who has, combined with an intellect to which my own has completely bowed itself, an earnest, serious insight into life; and I cannot look up to the ablest man in the world, not to one who shall combine in himself the *intellectual* faculties of Plato, Shakspeare, and Sir Isaac Newton, if I feel that in spite of all this I can at any time look upon the green earth or upon the starry sky, and see in them more than he does,—that in fifty years at latest I shall have cut him out. But I will end my letter with more restful

thoughts. This is my resting time in the twenty-four hours, and how thoroughly I do enjoy it! Let me compose and soften myself before I go to bed, with the thoughts of you and Leatheburn; though, by the bye, I do not suppose you can be there now. But you have seen it, Fred, and you have seen those whom I feel I am destined always to love best upon earth, and you can conceive what my longing to return has sometimes been. You may imagine how, in times of storm, and difficulty, and pain, I have longed for that haven of peace and love; how I have left the society of Brooks or Straddles, to think of my beloved mother and family; have closed my eyes upon the dusty hideousness of Ferozepore, to try and conjure up the image of Helvellyn and Thirlwater. It is an allowable joy, dear Fred, so to muse, but it must not weaken us for work. Were all life one peaceful sojourn at Leatheburn, it would no longer be a hard and sorrowful battle-field. God bless you, dear Fred, and strengthen us to work while it is day, and for our rest, to look forward, not to furlough, which death or poverty may rob us of, but to the peaceful night, which, if we may wait for it, will surely come. Good night. I have just shouted for my bearer, and am going to bed.

"Ever yours,

"Edward Oakfield."

If the reader is inclined to object that the assertions in the above letter are too sweeping and general, let him remember that this is the natural

failing of a young man on first entering into life; that he looks round, and not observing the intricate maze in which good and evil lie so closely intertwined, sees only, as he thinks, two main divisions, and in the freshness of his zeal lauds the one and condemns the other with a dogmatical heartiness which he is only too certain to learn, after a very little experience, to qualify. It is well if, while in after years he learns to be more discreet, he does not also become more lukewarm. Oakfield worked very hard, and there was no danger of his not being interested in his work. And yet it was a painful interest; it required a continual effort of faith to counteract the degrading spectacle which he witnessed every day in his court. It was hard to believe that there could be any foundation of human sympathy between himself and those men who, for the sake of a rupee, would, without the smallest scruple, without the faintest sign of shame or compunction when detected, lie on with an unblushing, un wearying effrontery. He asked Mr. Middleton about this; his answer was, "That the lying of natives in the courts of justice was not to be denied, nor certainly to be excused; and yet," Mr. Middleton wrote, "there is this to be said, that they themselves regard lying to an European magistrate, much in the same light as some schoolboys regard lying to a master; a low and wretched

and false principle, certainly; and yet we should probably think worse of a boy who told a gross lie to his companions and equals, in spite of every injunction of boy morality and honour, than of him who lied to his master with little or no sense of violating either. So it is with natives; follow them into their villages, it has been often said, and you will find that, when collected under the village trees in the presence of the village elders, they will tell the truth even against their interests; and shame and reproof from those around him will light upon the detected liar. It is certain that boys may be taught a higher principle of truthfulness, nay, that they have been: — I hear that in the great public schools in England the gross notion of its being fair to deceive a master (which certainly prevailed in my time at the school I was at), is quite exploded. I see no reason why it should be otherwise in time with those older, but still feebler, children, with whom we have to deal. After all, I believe that even now truth is so much stronger than falsehood that in most cases it manages, somehow or other, to assert itself; and for the rest you must be patient, and live in hope. Above all do not be disgusted, but stick, at all hazards, to your newly learnt doctrine, that men are better than they seem."

And so Oakfield tried to do. He worked very

hard at the unwelcome irksome details of his business, and at the same time endeavoured to keep in mind that the crowds who thronged his court daily were not merely suitors, plaintiffs, defendants, witnesses, but also *men ;* that the cases he disposed of were not merely official transactions, to be recorded, decided, and appealed upon, but were each the plot of so many dramas, exciting interests, hopes, fears, in so many homes and villages, which he never witnessed, but which existed none the less. This gave a human interest to his proceedings that was as a salt of vitality, preventing them from becoming dry, dead, and unprofitable ; from degenerating (to use an expressive modern phrase) into red tapeism. It gave too a fresh unwonted vigour to his new official routine, and he soon earned the reputation of being a very promising civil officer, even among those who were little enough able to guess what was the root from which this promise was developing itself. In fact, Oakfield found that for civil employ as well as military, for cutcherry as well as the field of battle, the fear of God was still, as much as it ever had been in the old times, a power which nothing could withstand, beating the worldly men on their own ground, and expatiating besides, on higher grounds, the very existence of which, in their philosophy, was never dreamt of. He admired and wished to learn from the wisdom of the chil-

dren of the Indian world: he admired and heartily sought to use and imitate the vigour which marked almost all the departments of the public service: he found the God of prudence and understanding worshipped, and he wished to join such worship to that of the God of reason and faith: he found everywhere a wise tendency to recognise and allow for material facts; he wished to do the same, but not with foolish inconsistency to ignore invisible spiritual facts; to behave as if *they* had no existence. He corresponded with Mr. Middleton, who often talked of retiring, and sometimes expressed a wish that he could be in Parliament when the next discussion on the charter came on: "Not," he wrote, "that I expect there will be much of importance done at this next renewal; and indeed I hope not; for the ignorance about India is so enormous that they would too probably only meddle with those things which should be let alone, and *vice versâ*. From what I hear, too, I should be afraid that people in England would be too apt to transfer the reforms and remedies required for their own country to us out here; whereas our complaints are essentially different, and so must be their treatment. Pauperism, for instance, is, I suppose, the one absorbing difficulty to an English statesman, including in the term pauperism all the manifold evils which lead to and spring out of it;

and so an intelligent friend of mine who is engaged night and day in his Lancashire manufacturing home, with this fearful mesh of problems, wrote to me not long ago to know 'what poor-law provisions we had out here?' It was a very natural question; yet you, and I, and anybody who has been a year in India, with his eyes open, feel inclined to smile at it. And why? Because we happen to know that pauperism does not exist; or rather if you like, that it exists so universally as to cease to be regarded as an evil. In ordinary years nobody starves, and the whole population lives at the rate of eight shillings per man per month. In extraordinary years, — such as the great famine year, 1837, shortly after I came out, — the whole country starved together, and then, by way of special poor-law for the nonce, the Government remitted the whole revenue for the year. It is an acute evil in this country, sent by a special dispensation of God, which no poor-laws in the world could remedy. In England it is a chronic evil, which I suppose the political economists would say God had nothing at all to do with; which I should call a dispensation of God no less than the other, but different in this, that it results in great measure from ordinary foreseeable causes which human interference can prevent or modify. The difficulty returns to us in another form; millions live at the rate of eight shillings

per man per month, and are quite contented; but what a thing it is that they should be contented! If we wished to state the difference in the most striking way, we might say, discontent is the mischief in England, content in India. In England how is the demand to be supplied? In India how is the demand (the first step in civilisation) to be created? On the whole, then, I hope that they will let us very much alone: it would be useful if some influential sensible witness from India could be there to point out the immediate reforms urgently wanted: such as a very large increase of officers, that there might be an end to such absurd anomalies as one man being appointed, and professing, to do the whole revenue, judicial, and executive work of a district of some hundreds of miles in extent; not only cruelly wasting the life and powers of the European officials, but driving the natives away from tribunals so over-crowded that they know it is physically impossible for them to obtain a sufficient hearing: this only requires thorough exposure to be altered; but, beyond some such points as this, the less the House of Commons meddle the better. There is more vigour and as much honesty in our government as in Downing Street, I believe.* The one reform above all others which we want, is better

* It must be remembered that Mr. Middleton was writing under the reign of the Russell ministry.

men ; a better class to be sent out: older, better educated, carefully selected. The Indian officer's progress (civil and military) has now too often but two or three stages, — child, foolish, profligate, respectable man of the world. We get shiploads of physical courage, and more or less sufficient intelligence every year: what we want in addition to these is a few bushels of thoughtfulness ; of pure, unselfish, nay, if you will, even visionary enthusiasm."

Meanwhile the secret which Oakfield had communicated to Wykham in his letter, viz., the threatened return of his own illness, could no longer be kept a secret. He still struggled on, being unwilling to throw up his work so soon after coming to it, in order to go to the hills on leave. But he made that common mistake which has killed and does kill so many in India; he clung on in the hope of the cold weather coming, and making it unnecessary for him to go away ; the consequence was, that in August he became so ill (so dangerously ill at one time that Mr. Middleton came over from Ferozepore to see him) that he had to go away, — not to Simla, but to England. His heart leaped up within him when he first heard the sentence ; and then he thought of his work, and begged to go to the hills instead. But the doctor was immoveable ; a sea voyage and a long respite from Indian climate, was the

only thing that could restore him; go he must, and for three years. And now poor Oakfield allowed himself to give way to the home prospect: his fate once decided, he turned away resolutely from his opening career of credit and distinction in India, and prepared for his journey. He set out in the very beginning of October; stopped a few days at Mr. Middleton's, and there too he met Stanton (whose troop was still at Ferozepore) and his wife. It was a touching thing to them when they parted; they remembered their previous meetings in the same house and station, which last had been the theatre of such important events to all of them: the bustle of Oakfield's court-martial, their re-union after the campaign, and Stanton's marriage; and their former common associations with the place, contrasted strangely with their present state of settled calm retrospection.

"Do you remember, Mrs. Stanton," Oakfield asked, "when I used to come and drink tea every morning in the verandah, long before you knew that fellow?" pointing to her husband.

"Oh yes! I remember it; but it seems ages ago."

"I fancy," said Stanton (when the hour of parting came), more sentimentally than was his wont, "that our Indian set is pretty well broken up."

"What, the Ferozepore school," rejoined Oak-

field, laughing, "or young India—which will you have? Yes, old fellow; and now I must be off, and when I get out of this place, my ties with this country will be pretty well severed, and I shall only have to make the best of my way home. Good bye, good bye, God bless you all," and he hurried off as Wykham had done almost exactly a year before, from the same house, bound in the same direction.

"Poor Mr. Oakfield!" said Mrs. Stanton, as they stood looking after his retreating palki, "he is an old friend, Henry, for India, is he not? I wonder when we shall see him again."

"An old friend," assented her brother, in a tone of still, but most deep, emotion, "God bless him! we shall see him in heaven."

She started and looked round, and read plainly in the countenances of both her husband and brother that they had in their hearts wished Edward Oakfield good bye for ever.

Oakfield left Ferozepore on the 10th of October; he travelled by dâk the whole way to Calcutta, which place he reached in a fortnight. He took up his abode at Spence's Hotel, for his friend at Garden Reach had left the country some time before. It seemed but a few months since he had gone to Spence's with Stanton the first evening he landed, and now, after five eventful years, he was on the point of disembarking, to

return to England with a shattered constitution. He had acquired much experience, certainly, in that long interval; and looking back, felt to have grown very much older; and yet to be as far as ever from having solved the difficulty which had then beset him. He had indeed earned a position in society of credit and respectability, but he knew that it did not require very much to attain to this. He had more than once put himself in contact with the world, but these had been but isolated efforts, hardly worth, so it seemed, the agitation and discomposure which they had cost. He had served both in a military and civil calling with zeal and diligence, and had gilded the service with such words as duty, state of life in which heaven had placed him, and so on; but were these indeed heaven's work; was God indeed glorified in them; or were they but part of that restless, meaningless agitation with which earth's children are ever with a pompous assumed importance disquieting themselves; and was there, after all, no wisdom in the world, but in a retired philosophical contemplation, varied only by labours of the most direct and obvious charity? Poor Oakfield! Wykham must have said truly that life had been no merry game for him, if these doubts had still haunted him, and were not answered yet. It is to be believed that there are many in these days like him; many of the best and the ablest,

who, year by year, shrink back from taking any share in the world's government, because they feel that such labour has long been hopelessly committed to the spirit of worldliness, to anarchy, to atheism. They fall back into an inner spiritual circle, whose contracted limits they themselves are the readiest to acknowledge, the most earnest to lament, leaving more active and what are called more important pursuits to those whose keener faith and insight enables them to discern the real and the divine, though covered over with never so many disguises; or to those —far more numerous—who, with duller consciences, worship the disguises themselves, bestow all their energy, all their faith, all their love, upon these.

Oakfield had to appear before the Medical Board to get his certificate confirmed. Having passed through this ordeal, he sallied forth straightway, and drove in his hired buggy to the office of the "Peninsular and Oriental Company," and took a berth in the overland steamer, "Haddington," to sail on the 8th, that very day week. The seven intervening days were occupied in making arrangements with outfitters, the military fund people, &c. &c., and perhaps chiefly in castle-building. He had written from Ferozepore to tell his friends that he should probably be at home in December, and now he wrote another short letter

to go by the same steamer as himself as far as Malta, and then to strike off viâ Marseilles, and reach England only four days before its writer. Again reminiscences crowded almost overpoweringly upon Oakfield as he closed this, his last Indian letter, and then thought of his first; which he well remembered writing the very day after his landing, full of his first impressions of the new life which had now become so familiar to him.

He had met at Spence's the person who was to share his cabin in the steamer, and was glad to find him a quiet gentlemanly man. Capt. Robbins, who, like himself and so many others, was returning to England on sick leave, broken down by fifteen consecutive years of Indian sun.

The eventful 8th arrived; Oakfield and Capt. Robbins drove down together about seven in the morning to the ghat where the steamer was lying. It was a fine day, of course, but still hot even in November, mid-winter being the only time when Calcutta is for a few weeks reasonably cool. Oakfield had seen no shipping since the day he landed, and, as he set foot on deck, looked up at the smoking funnel, heard the buzzing gurgle of the nascent steam, listened to the strange homelike shouts "Malta," "Gibraltar," "Southampton," "Southampton," as the mail-boxes were brought on board, looked at the di-

rections of the various packages which lay about the ship, containing the names of remote English country villages, English towns and counties, he felt the spell of his exile dissolve itself within him, and perceptibly entered upon another phase of existence.

The bell rings, the pale-faced men and women who have accompanied their home-bound friends to the ship now move off, a dolorous troop, to return listlessly to their desks and counting-houses in that hot painful city, which it is to be feared will appear distasteful enough to them to-day, after thus standing as it were for an hour to two upon the threshold of home. Again the bell rings, the Pilot and the Captain have taken their stand upon the paddle-box: the former slowly raises his hand, a small sharp-looking boy posted at the hatchway leading down into the engine-rooms sees the signal, and with a quick indifferent shout communicates its import to the inmates of the glowing den beneath. Those swarthy inmates hear and obey; the shrill scream of the escaping steam ceases, Oakfield rushes to the side and sees the huge wheel slowly revolve; then, as the great ship glides away, he watches the scarcely receding shore; the wheels turn more quickly, stirring up the bubbling yeasty waters, and raising in the ship's wake that trail of rolling waves that is to

follow them home; small boats toiling up the river seem to fly past them, animated with their own speed; Garden Reach and its deadly verdure is passed; the passengers turn to look once more at the City of Palaces, but it is gone; and they are gliding down between the quiet banks of the sacred Hooghley, already three miles on their way to England.

They had started at ten o'clock; about noon, just as with that readiness which never fails an English society, they were settling naturally into the feelings and habits of voyagers, the steamer from England came in sight: the speed was slackened, the crews of both ships manned the rigging and exchanged hearty cheers as they passed each other. Oakfield tried to join in those friendly huzzas, but his heart and his voice failed him; he went behind the wheel and looked after the other ship, more disposed to weep than to cheer. What hopes and fears were being borne on to their near fulfilment! what histories of most thrilling interest were being acted there, in anxious expectation of the new chapter so soon to open! There were the sailors returning to Calcutta for the hundredth time, looking at every object with the careless eye of custom, and only glad to have their voyage done: there was the old Indian returning with pleasure to the land of

curries, marring his own enjoyment by feverish speculations as to what appointment he would get, and whether so and so would have superseded him in his absence; there was the wife returning to her husband to share with him the pain of separation from the beloved children she has left behind her; there are the young ladies coming out to their parents, or brothers, or uncles, viewing every thing, some with intelligence, some, it is to be feared, with an inquisitive insipid feebleness; and there, too, God help them! are the griffs; — oh, how Oakfield's heart was filled with sympathy for them! Some indeed were probably in little want of sympathy; coarse, thoughtless, foolish, as ready to take the road to perdition in India as they would have been in England; others sanguine, bold, ambitious, crowding to the vessel's bows with eager interest to catch the first glance of what has so long been the land of their dreams and fancies; others, again, trying to veil an aching heart (poor boys, it seems to them well nigh a broken one!) under a garb of manliness, of indifference, of recklessness; and some few looking upon all things with a piteous vacancy that proclaims them to belong to that class of characterless victims who are the devil's first, and favourite, and easiest prey; but all, probably, more or less hopeful, more or less anxious. What a depth of

fathomless interest was centred in each individual case! and regarded more generally, here was another instalment of English power; a fresh supply of that material from which the soldiers and statesmen of India were to be formed. What generals, what council members, what governors may that ship contain! but then once more Oakfield turned in thought to the higher interest, and added, as indeed the most wonderful climax, what men!

The Haddington continued her voyage, and anchored that evening at the Sandheads: the next morning the pilot went off, taking with him Oakfield's last official communication to the government of India, the report of his departure on 8th November by the P. O. S. N. Co.'s ship Haddington, for Europe, on medical certificate. Once more he determined that he would set foot on Indian ground. They reached Madras on the third day, and he went ashore in one of the masullah boats, through the tossing surf. The steamer was to start again at sun-set. Shortly before that time he came on board, and while the anchor was being weighed, stood watching that wonderful country, of which he had now taken his last farewell. Parting will make us kindly disposed even to those persons and places which we have loved the least. His Indian life passed slowly in review

before him, and he owned he was not a little indebted to that country whose purple shores were fast fading from his view in the increasing darkness. There lay the Indian empire, the greatest wonder of the world; there reposed those hostile races whose struggles had been ended in common submission to the stronger foreign stranger; there that English community was eating and drinking, and sleeping and laughing, heedless or unconscious of their own miraculous position, and the enormous responsibility that burdened it: there, too, within those shores were his own friends, Stanton and Middleton; and there slept the young boy whom he had left on the banks of the Ganges; there lay India, teeming, like every other part of the world, with its million of individual human interests, passions, and sufferings; the history of which, as a nation, had had its beginning in marvel, and of which all ask, and none can tell, what the end shall be.

So mused Oakfield; and with a long deep sigh of thankfulness, of penitence, of hope, of joy, of sorrow, of all emotion, he took his last look over the dark calm sea, and at the intermittent flashes of the Madras light, now the only object visible from the shore, and went below, but before he slept, uttered a fervent prayer for that country which he should never see again.

CHAP. VIII.

"Oh! dream of joy! is this indeed
The lighthouse top I see?
Is this the hill? Is this the kirk?
Is this mine own countrie?"

COLERIDGE.

"Hame, hame, hame; hame fain wad I be,
Oh hame, hame, hame, to my ain countrie!
When the flower is i' the bud, and the leaf is on the tree,
The larks shall sing me hame in my ain countrie;
Hame, hame, hame; hame fain wad I be,
Oh hame, hame, hame to my ain countrie!"

ALLAN CUNNINGHAM.

THE Haddington continued her voyage in great prosperity over a mirror-like sea. The weather was delightful, the days sunny, cloudless, warm but not oppressive, the nights just cold enough to make a blanket welcome. On the 15th of November, the seventh day of their voyage, they came in sight, about six o'clock in the morning, of the fairy-like island of Ceylon.

As they approached and saw those bright emerald woods in the foreground, with the red roofs of the tiny houses peeping out of them, more like

a highly-coloured and varnished card-board picture than a part of the actual every-day world, the harbour lying with its unruffled surface like an inland lake fringed with the grey green of the cocoa trees, while in the distant back-ground rose up ranges of blue wavy mountains; it was not hard to people this scene with the fancy forms of Hindoo mythology; an army of monkeys might easily be imagined advancing to the attack, and finding a rich spoil in the cocoa forest.

They left Ceylon on the same evening, and began the longest stage of their overland voyage, standing right across the Arabian Gulf for the Straits of Babelmandeb. That same night, as Oakfield stood by the bowsprit watching the strange stars, which in those latitudes cluster round the Southern Cross, his meditations were suddenly broken in upon by a loud voice exclaiming in a well-known tone, "Well, Mr. Oakfield! here you are at last." Oakfield turned to look at the speaker; he supposed that all the passengers had been in bed; these midnight musings of his had always been undisturbed by any human presence, save that of the silent watching sailors.

He himself used, at this time, to leave a bed where he could not sleep, and wrapping himself in the Scotch plaid, which had done like duty on his first voyage to India, in which he had slept

before now, and hoped perhaps to sleep again upon the side of Helvellyn, would walk, or sit, or lie down in different parts of the ship, building his castles and exercising his thoughts beneath the kindly teaching of the silent sky and the "wide glimmering sea." He turned to look at the person who had addressed him; the moon, within three days of the full, shed a bright pure light upon a countenance and figure that spoke little of brightness or of purity. He recognised the man instantly; the seedy black clothes looked seedier, the red dissipated face more dissipated, the coarse sandy hair involved in wilder tangles by the accumulated matting of four years of uncultivated vegetation, the grey twinkling eye seemed to have had much of its moist humour clouded by the mists of a growing sensuality; but that face and that Irish voice could belong to no other than his steamer acquaintance, the friend of his poor dear papa—Malone.

"Where did you spring from? I had no notion you were on board."

"I dare say not, Sir, for I am where I believe no one would think of looking for a Malone; I am a second-class passenger, Sir; there—you know it all."

"I am sorry that circumstances should oblige you to travel uncomfortably, Mr. Malone," replied

Oakfield, who could not bring himself, however, to regard it as any very tremendous calamity; "but I still wonder that I have not met you, for I have been in this part of the ship almost every night."

"Ah! you see I have been in my bed for these seven days; for the real fact is I have been cruel bad with the sea-sickness, Mr. Oakfield."

"You must be a bad sailor; for we have had the sea like a mill pond the whole way; well, but did you know I was on board? You spoke just now as if you did."

"Ah, bless you, yes; I know the name of every creature on board."

Oakfield could not help smiling as he recognised this old trait, indulged even in spite of sea-sickness and cabin imprisonment.

"Well, but, Mr. Malone, why didn't you send for me if you were ill, and if you knew I was on board?"

"Why, you know, young gentlemen are proud sometimes, and I thought you might not like your friends to know you came to see a second-class passenger."

"I am very much obliged to you for thinking me a very contemptible puppy," replied Oakfield.

"No, no," said the other, hastily, "I knew you wouldn't feel so really, but then I wasn't sure; for

after all, the Oakfields of Leatheburn have a right to be proud if any have."

"Do you still maintain, Mr. Malone, that I am the fortunate possessor of £2000 a-year?"

The other laughed in an awkward, half-abashed way; it was evident that he had fallen terribly in the world, and, consequently, in his own estimation, since he had patronised Oakfield, and tried to hold him up as his friend, the landed proprietor, on board the river steamer.

"No, no; but I suppose you are really going home to live at Leatheburn?"

"To live upon nothing for the rest of my life? No, I am going home on sick certificate."

"Ah! you look ill; awful country! I was nearly a dead man myself after I saw you; I travelled all over the three presidencies on a tattoo, at the rate of fifty miles a-day, sleeping under trees or in the serais; I killed about three tattoos, but couldn't kill myself, though God knows I should not much have minded changing places with the poor dead beasts at times."

There was something in the despair with which this was said, and the broken-down forlorn appearance of one whom he remembered so flaunting and self-confident, which touched Oakfield. He hardly knew, however, what to say; for he knew nothing of his companion's business, or circumstances, or

prospects; and on all these points Mr. Malone was as reserved as ever. He confessed, indeed, that he was hard-up, and hinted that he had lost his engagement with some newspaper establishment; and probably Oakfield was not far wrong in setting him down as a poor literary adventurer, who had wandered about the world all his life ministering to men's excitements, and now was about to reap, in a premature old age, the fruits of so ignominious a service. A man who had been used to writing flashy articles, first in English, then in Indian newspapers, for his bread; using the terms duty, principle, and conscience with the free indifference of a paid hack, till the great names, so often on his lips and at his finger ends, were dead in his heart; and while he seemed to take an interest in—nay, believed himself interested in the "cause of the church," "the cause of missionary labour," "the cause of the aristocracy," "the cause of the press," cared in truth for nothing; and tried to supply the utter vacuum of such an existence by the temporary excitements of debauchery.

Oakfield was moved with compassion, and said, on the impulse of the moment, "Can I do anything for you in England?" An instant afterwards he was sorry he had asked the question: he knew he *could* do nothing, and had probably taken on his own shoulders a burden that would stick

like the Old Man of the Sea. He was relieved, therefore, when Mr. Malone answered, "No, Sir; no, thank you. If ever I do come to England again, I shall remember your offer, but I leave you at Aden."

"At Aden!" exclaimed Oakfield; then thought, "what a place in all the world for a ruined man to go to for the purpose of retrieving his fortunes!"

Mr. Malone saw his surprise, and muttered something about having an interest in the hotel there; which left Oakfield under the impression that he was going to turn inn-keeper; perhaps the thousandth speculation which this Protean man had tried in the course of his multifarious life. Oakfield had several conversations with him before they reached Aden, and was much impressed with the pathetic sight of the wreck of a fellow-man. Malone himself gave up more and more entirely the old slang, and free and easy manner; talked no more of Oakfield's poor dear papa, though he seemed to take a humanizing pleasure in recurring to the period of his own intercourse with him in the days of his respectability; and when the ship anchored at Aden, he said to Oakfield,

"The fact is, Sir, the proprietor of the hotel here is a sort of cousin of mine, and when I was a ruined man, so help me God, Mr. Oakfield, nearer actual starvation than perhaps any Cambridge gra-

duate ever yet was, I wrote to him (by token I hadn't money to pay the letter inland, and walked to Madras to post it there), and he behaved like an Irishman and told me to come to him, and here I am, and I suppose the descendant of all the Malones must turn waiter or boots; and now, Mr. Oakfield, I'll make free, before I leave the only respectable friend I have in the world, to ask the loan of a sovereign."

Oakfield could have smiled at the feeling which prompted the use of the word loan: he was able, however, and most willing to give the poor man five pounds; and with an earnest wish, but little hope, of his well-doing, shook hands with him, and watched him as he went over the side, and (being already almost himself again in the possession of five pounds) ordered about the boatmen in his old style of happy Irish insolence; his very brogue seeming to spring up, phœnix-like, under the golden shower. Malone vanished from Oakfield's sight, and in a few lines he must vanish from ours also.

About eight months after, as Mr. Middleton was sitting at breakfast at Ferozepore, he was told that a "Sahib" wanted to speak to him. Going out, he found the person, twice described, of Mr. Malone; it was evident that he had fallen upon his legs once more: the misfortune, the starvation, the pathos,

which, when Oakfield parted with him at Aden, had seemed to give some hope for the man, were all gone, and he was again the loud, sanguine, hypocritical, insolent Irishman. He wanted Mr. Middleton to support a new paper, which he proposed editing under the imposing title of the *Cis-Sutlej Gazette*.

"I knew, by-the-bye," Mr. Malone said, "a friend of yours; a young man called Oakfield."

"Hah!" said Mr. Middleton, with a sudden interest, which the eulogy upon the *Cis-Sutlej Gazette* had failed to awaken; "when did you know him?"

"Sure, Mr. Middleton, didn't I meet him five years ago, on the Ganges, in the same steamer as yourself; and then I was on the overland with him going to Aden. A good family he belongs to, but I fear he'll never be worthy of it; he was but a tame, poor-spirited young chap."

"Sir," interrupted Mr. Middleton, sternly, "you are foolishly mistaken."

Mr. Malone wished to retract directly he saw how the land lay, but perceiving he made no progress, took a speedy departure. Mr. Middleton went back to his breakfast; Mr. Malone went —reader, we know not where; but take our word for it that he still wanders up and down the earth with the curse of sensuality and servility

upon him; and that the first number of the *Cis-Sutlej Gazette* has not yet made its appearance.

To return to our narrative. The Haddington had a good passage down the Red Sea; the weather was still calm, and clear, and beautiful. Oakfield continued his forecastle vigils without any fear of interruption. On the night of the first of December they crossed the spot to which tradition assigns the passage of the Israelites. Oakfield, of course, took the tradition for no more than it was worth, yet it was an awful thing to look over the sea at the dark horizon, and think that there lay Mount Sinai, where God had in very truth appeared and spoken with the sound of the thunder and the voice of words unto his people; that there was the shore where the Heaven-preserved host had landed, and Miriam and her fellows had played upon the timbrels, saying, "Sing unto the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea;" that near here, at any rate, was the place where the waters had rolled back and been a wall upon this side and a wall upon that, while the chosen race — a wandering band of emigrants, let the scoffing antiquarian tell us, but let us rather say, with a truer wisdom, a more prudent-faith, the chosen seed, the royal Priesthood, the peculiar People; carrying with them the destinies of an unconscious world —

passed through on dry land, which the Egyptians assaying to do, perished, and were drowned in the depths of the sea.

With break of day our sleepless traveller was again on deck; the contracting shores and the red cliffs marked strikingly both the shape of the Red Sea and the obvious geological peculiarity from which it derives its name. The ship went on, and by eleven o'clock on the morning of the 2nd of December, anchored in Suez roads. The Indian half of the voyage was over! The whole party of voyagers, about ninety in number, were landed, after about three quarters of an hour uncomfortably spent in boats, upon that yellow arid shore, to which the great white staring hotel of Suez seemed to give an appearance of even greater heat and discomfort. The vans were got ready, and in an hour's time Oakfield was going over that wild sandy wilderness as fast as four Arab, almost unbroken, horses, could draw him. On he jogged, in a state of half-sleepy, half-painfully jolted consciousness; no event broke that eighteen hours, except the occasional, noiseless, stealthy tread of the spongy-footed camels, as, in long strings, they glided by in the ghostly darkness, laden with the passengers' luggage and the mail-boxes.

At three o'clock on the morning of the 3rd,

they reached Grand Cairo — wonderful city! resting under the shadow of the Pyramids, and all the ages since the Arabian Nights: but alas! for the ignominious truth, Oakfield was fast asleep from the time he reached the Oriental Hotel till he was roused to go down to the steamer upon the Nile. He embarked; and having, with the wisdom of an experienced traveller, committed his luggage at Suez, with unquestioning confidence, to the servants of his Highness the Pasha, found it safely placed on board the steamer; while poor Robbins, who had tried to go upon the orthodox principle of never allowing his belongings to go out of his sight, after breaking the hearts of all the infidel porters at Suez, and disquieting himself and his companions in the van with the clamorous expression of his fears, now found those fears realised; for the red green-striped carpet-bag was nowhere to be found!

The steam was up, and the little vessel paddled quickly down the fertilising river. The name of a Liverpool firm, engraved conspicuously over the engine-room, seemed strangely associated with the richly-flourishing banks, with the mosques and minarets, the bright costumes and the solid uncouth buildings, which all spoke of the days of Mussulman conquest, of Herodotus's kings, of Isis and Anubis, and of that small family which came down

from the land of Canaan, because they heard "that there was corn in Egypt."

They steamed quickly down the Nile, and reached Atfeh and the Mahmoudie canal in the middle of the night, and had to change into the smaller boats there ready. The shouts and cruelty of the janissaries, as they beat and abused the unhappy work-people, who laboured from fear only, made Oakfield glad that this was the last time he would have to witness despotic government. At eleven o'clock, on the morning of the fifth, they reached Alexandria, and were there greeted with the joyful tidings that the Ripon steamer had come in three days previously, and was now lying in the roadstead, waiting for the passengers. It was, indeed, a step homewards to be in the Mediterranean; to set foot on the very vessel which was to take them to England. The captain and the sailors were all equally anxious to be off; the passengers had certainly no wish to linger; where all are of one mind, work goes on briskly; and that very evening, at six o'clock, the Ripon sailed out of the harbour, on her way to Southampton. The change of hemisphere was now very perceptible; and although in that southern latitude (strange to say, nearly the same parallel as Lahore), even December breezes blew gently, yet at midnight they would draw their blankets over

them with a shiver, that gave a foretaste of that acquaintance with an English winter which they soon hoped to renew.

At Malta they anchored, but were prevented by the quarantine regulations from going on shore. Oakfield could only stand and look at the white houses that clustered up the precipitous side of Valetta, overhanging the harbour, and think how he had rambled there five years before with Stanton. A strange coincidence occurred here to divert the monotony of a ship-imprisonment in sight of land. As the passengers were, with the tenacity of true Indians, taking their usual ante-dinner promenade upon their limited "course"—the flush-deck of the Ripon—they saw a large man-of-war frigate standing slowly out towards the mouth of the harbour, with the homeward-bound pennant streaming almost down to the deck. "What is she? what is she?" was the universal, admiring question. It was with a pleasant shock of surprise that Oakfield heard the answer, "H.M.S. 'Amazon,'" and recollected that she was the ship to which young Walter Vernon belonged, of whose first impressions of sea-life he had read, in his letter to Arthur, when on his sick bed at Hajeepoor. They were a happy set in that ship; going home to spend Christmas season in England, after three years' service on the Mediterranean station.

The Ripon got to Gibraltar on the 14th of December, and there, for the last time in foreign waters, dropped anchor. The same quarantine regulations were in operation at Gibraltar as at Malta, which perhaps only added to the general impatience to get the coaling finished, and be off. This business was completed in about six hours, and by sun-set they were under weigh again, passing through the straits into the "still vexed" waters of the Bay of Biscay, where the same wind seemed to be raging which Oakfield had left there in 1845. Happily, however, it was now in their favour, as then it had been against them; and although it sent a considerable portion of the passengers—who, in the fair-weather voyaging, which it had been their good fortune to enjoy since they left Calcutta, had begun to consider themselves tried mariners—weeping to their beds, those who like Oakfield were not troubled in this way, wickedly rejoiced in the stormy breezes, which, if they emptied the interiors of their shipmates, served no less to fill the sails of the ship. So they steamed swiftly on; the ship moving, as the sailors fondly, but irreverently, remarked, "like a jackass with its head turned towards home."

On the night of the 20th of December, about eight o'clock, when the wind, now thoroughly imbued with English cold, had driven everybody

below, as Oakfield sat writing a letter; while old gentlemen played their rubber and young ones mixed their negus, all discussing, however, the approaching termination of their voyage and the different things which they would respectively order for their first dinner in England—a subject that had been dwelt upon with an unwearying enthusiasm from the day they left Calcutta—a slight sensation became perceptible at the end of the saloon nearest the hatchway. "What is it? what is it?" "England in sight!" exclaimed a man who had just come down, looking cold and blue, but evidently happy with the importance of his intelligence; "they have just seen the Lizard lights." In two minutes the saloon was empty; old gentlemen dropped their cards, the young ones their tumblers; all rushed up to see with their own eyes what they had been told of. There it was—the object that had such attraction for them all—that small red glimmering light, now hidden beneath the waves, then suddenly, as the ship rose, flashing out again its all-exciting ray. Each time it appeared, there was a little shout; for that was England! The manifestation of a pure genuine sensation is always imposing, even when we do not share it; but when we ourselves sympathise with it, one of the most softening, exhilarating influences our nature is capable of receiving.

Oh, you grand and soaring and deep-searching philosophers, who sit at home and sneer at the popular cant about patriotism, and pique yourselves upon being citizens of the world, for God's sake go and live ten years in India, that you may return and know the power of that vulgar, common-place love of country, which every schoolboy has declaimed about, and which you think it below your philosophical dignity to acknowledge. Leave for a day your speculations on the relations of the will and the passions, and the effect of this and that upon the human mind, and go out with a pilot to meet an East Indian home-bound ship, and make your observations there. See that old, grey-headed man, who for forty years there, has been adding house to house, and worshipping mammon, and dying daily to everything ideal and spiritual; and watch the hard lines about his worldly mouth melt into a gracious weakness, as as he turns away to hide the strange emotion which, against his will, obtains for the time the mastery over him, as that small candle-beam recalls the forgotten years when he loved man more than money, when he himself was loved by a mother or a sister, with an affection different from that of those who have since loved his rupees, and his appointment, and his dinners. See that youth of five and twenty, whose folly, sickness

and the shadow of death have not overcome; yet now, though it be but for an instant, sobered into the wisdom of love and tenderness; watch that other, who seeks a secret place that he may weep away the overwhelming pressure of his devout and godly joy; and then cease to deny with your theories and your sneers that which really *is;* cease to speculate upon or question the existence or the wisdom of that which so plainly declares itself by signs, which all the wisdom of the world cannot gainsay nor resist; cease, while talking of divine truth, to blaspheme God, by denying the holiness — nay, the very being — of those feelings of love and unselfish reverence, which are of all things the most certainly His work.

Oakfield was not ashamed to sympathise, to the fullest extent, with the excited throng around him; even upon the youthful Ensign, who had babbled all the voyage about the Arab horses he had left in India, and the sensation he would produce upon the turf in England, he could, when he broke out into — "Breathes there the man with soul so dead?" &c., look with a friendly countenance. He did not try to analyse his own sensations, to know why or how he was affected; he was content to gaze, with a tearful eye, and feel the tumult of his rushing blood, as his whole soul seemed to be moved within him.

After some half-hour's light-house gazing, the cold cutting wind drove the majority below again. Oakfield went to bed, and woke the next morning, the 21st, with the hope that his rarely sound slumber might be accepted as an earnest of what an English climate was to do for him. He was up at seven o'clock, and dressed, and on deck by day-break.

It was the dawn of an English winter, than which nothing could look more lovely to the eyes of that home-stricken crew. The coast of Dorset was plainly visible through the clear frosty air — there was England in its very actuality. Men were engaged in getting up the luggage out of the hold, for the captain said that he hoped to pass the Needles at eight, and (the tide favouring them, as the winds and waves had done throughout the voyage) to come to his moorings at Southampton, by noon. They breakfasted at eight, and during that last hasty meal, according to the captain's foretelling, passed the Needles, and felt in the abated motion of the vessel, the welcome shelter of the Isle of Wight.

Breakfast was soon over; the speechifying had been disposed of at dinner the night before; and everybody was on deck — a motley crowd, dressed in every imaginable shade of costume, from the orthodox broad cloth and black hat, to the full

paraphernalia of an Indian white paper helmet and brown-holland shooting coat. The excitement of the previous night had subsided; few men's sentimentalism will stand broad daylight; and as the prospect of landing and the custom house became more and more immediate, there appeared on most countenances the shade of that gloom which ever pursues an Englishman in connection with his luggage. And now men have done rushing down into their cabins, to make positively the last preparations, and all walk about the deck somewhat pale with anxiety.

Twelve o'clock! — the sun stands directly over them, and the Ripon's bells strike eight as they enter the Southampton water. There lies their goal, visible before them; the huge steamer rushes on amongst the still increasing multitude of smaller fry, all of whom look with interest upon the "Indian Mail;" now the houses can be seen, and now the people on the pier, and the word is given, "Ease her!" a few short splashing revolutions of the monster wheels and they sweep up the harbour; – "Stop her!"— the voyage is over —the great ship floats alongside of the quay; then all motion entirely ceases and Oakfield has got back to England!

Then the eighty or ninety passengers, who for the last seven weeks had been living in such inti-

mate relations, melted away with a careless nod, or shake of the hand, into the mutual indifference and ignorance of each other which was to last for the rest of their lives. Oakfield waited patiently till the custom-house officer shouted for the letter "O," and then his patience was not tried much longer; his trunks were unlocked, the contents hastily tossed over, and he was a free man to go wheresoever he would. He first of all posted his letter; and then hurried off to the railway station, where the three o'clock train to London was on the point of starting. With a wondering consciousness of the gradual ease with which he was relapsing into the old habits of five years ago, he got into a first-class carriage, instinctively took a corner seat with his back to the engine, and put his head out of the window to look for a newsvender. A little boy with a great tray of newspapers and cheap books slung before him, sees and understands the look.

"*Times*, Sir — *Times* - *Morning Chronicle* — *Morning Post*."

"The *Times*, please," said Oakfield, and, as he took in the oblong-folded paper, saw that morning's date upon it, and took a sixpence out of his waistcoat pocket to pay for it, he could almost have sworn that he had never been out of England for a day. The bell rings — with infinitely less noise than

accompanies the uplifting of a single palanquin — the train, with its cargo of two hundred people, glides slowly off; emerges from the station, and in two minutes is darting through the fields of Hampshire at the rate of five and thirty miles an hour.

"Wonderful!" ejaculated Oakfield, as he leant back and turned to the leading article. There were two middle-aged men in the same carriage, whose conversation unmistakeably pronounced them to be inhabitants of "the city."

"The heavy portion of the Indian Mail came in this morning," observed one of them.

"Yes; so I heard," replied the other, "by the Ripon; very little in it; Indian securities just the same; Lord Dalhousie going to Peshawur, it appears."

"Peshawur; where is that?"

"One of the great towns recently taken in the Punjab; one of the largest military stations, my young nephew tells me, in India."

"Ah!" said the other, "I dare say. What a pity it is, that they always will post their troops in those big towns, exposing the poor young lads to all its temptations and luxuries! If I had my way, I'd send them all to out-of-the-way places, where they wouldn't have the opportunity to get into debt. I hear people talk about the banks; I

say I know better; I know what it is runs away with youngsters' money. It isn't the banks, bless you! it's your theatre-going every night of the week, and your tavern supper-parties afterwards, and your sky-larking, and what not!"

"But you don't mean," interrupted his companion, "that they have theatres and taverns, and all that sort of thing, in those outlandish parts?"

"Don't I?" rejoined the other, with a knowing shake of the head—"I do though. What I say is, that wherever Englishmen go, they take these things with them. Look at the number of Queen's regiments out there;—you don't suppose that they will be content to go without their little amusements? Why, there's Calcutta, I'm told, just like a second London!"

"Indeed!" said the other, with credulous surprise; "well, I shouldn't have thought it; my young nephew must be a quiet youngster, for he never seems to see any of this gaiety."

"Trust him for seeing it," rejoined the knowing one; "doesn't like to tell 'old nunks in the city' of it; keeps it all snug. Ah! I know what young men are; find it all out some day when he sends his bills home—eh? Where is he?—Bengal Presidency?"

"Yes,—Bengal I believe it is; he was stationed at Poonah, I think, or some such place, when last I heard of him."

Oakfield could not trust himself to listen any longer; he held up the paper, as it was, to conceal his laughter. "And these are the kind of people," he thought, "who take, we are assured, such a glowing interest in India and the Indian Army? Well, we oughtn't to wonder, when the *Times* takes the lead, by talking of 'the seductions of the luxurious towns of India'—heaven save the mark! I should like to see the man who wrote that, sitting in a tent at Peshawur in the month of May, with a dust storm blowing, and half a dozen Khybercees prowling about in the distance with an eye to his horse."

With which charitable reflection he turned to let down the window, and put his head out to look at Winchester, to which station the train was now slowly approaching. There were the old towers of the Cathedral, and there "the Hills," looking, as he so often remembered to have seen them, bleak and chill in the cold grey dimness of a December afternoon. "The holidays, I suppose," he thought to himself, "or I would certainly stop and take a look at the old place."

The train moved on, and Oakfield fell asleep. When he awoke it was quite dark; he had been dreaming of Ferozepore, and started up, hearing nothing but the dull rumble of the train, seeing nothing but the yellow gleam of the carriage lamp

overhead, wondering where he was; then the joyful remembrance of his position came pleasantly over him. Finding that he had the carriage now to himself, he put the window down and looked out. What home association there was in the blast of cold fiercely rushing air that met him, as he gazed out into the darkness!

Still the train dashed on; the blood-red cinders from time to time flying past the carriage from the engine, the piercing scream of which now and then breaks the stillness of the winter night with some salutary signal. Presently Oakfield looked out again, and saw lights on the horizon; momentarily they brighten and increase, and he looks down from the embankment, which they are crossing, upon the suburbs of London. Still they rush on, and the huge London itself is before them. The Nine Elms station, which had been the terminus when Oakfield left England, is passed, and the train is winding quickly on among the very streets of the metropolis. The speed slackens; the unearthly creaking of the breaks is heard; suddenly the darkness is forsaken for light fiercer than the noon-day sun, as with a clash and a swing and a rattle, the train draws its snaky length through the gas lighted iron-roofed station, and then—stops.

The doors are all flung open, almost simultane-

ously; porters walk briskly along from carriage to carriage; and in an instant the passengers are all disgorged upon the platform. Oakfield, half-smiling as he feels the anxious frown of a luggage seeker knitting itself upon his forehead, walks up to the van behind the engine. He sees, claims, and appropriates his well-travelled trunks, and desires a porter to call a cab. His luggage is hoisted up; he steps inside; recognises, almost with pleasure, the well-known damp-strawey odour so peculiar to a London cab, and inimitable *tout ensemble* of a London cabman, as he shows his red face at the window, to ask, "Where to, Sir!" "Euston Hotel;" and they rattled off over the loud pavement; sink into silence upon the macadamized road across Waterloo Bridge—from which Oakfield looks down upon the broad steaming river; are lost for a time in the tangled wilderness of the Strand: improve their pace up Regent street, where Oakfield looks, with a child's marvel, at the shop windows, and thinks of "the luxurious towns" of India; and finally, after sundry twists and turns, pull up before the well remembered door of the Euston.*

* The author hopes that the detail of this description may be excused, as, however tedious or frivolous it may appear to the English reader, he trusts it may not be without interest to some exiles in India, for whom such details have an attraction as only exiles can comprehend.

Oakfield was determined not to commence his English life by a struggle with a cabman, so having dismissed that functionary with a remuneration which even he had not the conscience to murmur at, he entered the large and magnificent coffee room. He sees the blazing fires in the spacious grates; the bright mahogany tables, whereat people, either singly or in parties of two and three, are indulging in the luxurious privacy of a quiet dinner; sees the tables in the centre of the room piled with papers and periodicals; casts a glance at the magnificent proportions of the room, and then remembered that a "dâk bungalow" is an Indian "*hotel!*"

There was a party of four very young men dining at the next table. By the ludicrous profusion which covered their table, and the rapid succession and intermixture of wines of every climate and country, Oakfield would have known them for Oxford undergraduates, even if they had not proclaimed themselves so to be by their unwearying flow of 'shop,' and incessant repetition of the word 'men.' Looking at them he could with difficulty believe that only five years ago he himself had been, by position at least, such an one.

His dinner soon made its appearance, and he seemed to dispose of it rather with the appetite of a traveller than that of an invalid. Indeed, he

was throughout borne up by an excitement which might easily be mistaken for health.

He was up and at breakfast by nine o'clock the next morning, and then walked over to the station, where the ten o'clock train to the North was on the point of starting. It would be painting the lily to describe the scene at the station, after the inimitable sketches given by Sir Francis Head, in 'Stokers and Pokers.' Oakfield did not feel up to doing the whole distance in one day, so booked his place only to Lancaster. As the train rushed on through the hours of the day, and the counties of England, the morning lightly gleamed over the cheerful woodlands of Hertfordshire; the noon-day sun glared down, with its short frosty heat upon the sloping pastures of Warwickshire and Leicestershire; the sober tints of a winter afternoon were shed with soothing harmony upon the warm brown moors of Staffordshire; and night was falling as the train crossed the glimmering Mersey at Warrington, and hastened on among the unceasing fires of the manufacturing north.

He started again by the railway at half-past six the next day. It was the 23rd December, a clear cloudless frosty morning; and it would not have required the home interest to give delight to that morning's drive through the tinkling woods—white with hoar-frost, green and red with the

Christmas holly — that every now and then disclosed through their opening the joyous waters of Windermere, as, blue and life-like, they rippled to the shore. They passed on to Grasmere, where, under the shadow of that white church tower, beneath the yew trees which his own hands had planted, Wordsworth lay asleep;—Wordsworth—the greatest Englishman of his age; known to the world as a master of English poetry, but known also in these valleys as the good sympathising neighbour, the true simple-minded friend, the noble venerable man. "There he lies," thought Oakfield; "and surely it would be treason to humanity to associate one thought of sadness, or anything but quiet joy, with his death."

And now they are ascending Dunmail Raise; the heap of stones—the silent witnesses of the crisis of Oakfield's destiny—is passed; he is in Cumberland — his own county; he sees with his eyes that lake and those woods and hills, which he has seen so often in fancy, or in the visions of the night, during the last five years; the descent is commenced, and in less than half-an-hour his journey will be over. And now let us leave him there, on Dunmail Raise, while we see with what feelings his coming was waited for at home.

CHAP. IX.

"Sleep sweetly, tender heart, in peace:
Sleep, holy spirit, blessed soul;
While the stars burn, the moons increase,
And the great ages onward roll.

"Sleep till the end, true soul and sweet:
Nothing comes to thee new or strange;
Sleep full of rest from head to feet;
Lie still, dry dust, secure of change."

TENNYSON.

THE Oakfield family were still unaware, when Wykham and Margaret became engaged, of the change which had taken place in the former's fortunes. It was with happy hearts therefore that they heard Margaret was not to be entirely lost to them; that she was at least to remain in England. Of course Wykham postponed his departure for some time longer than he had intended; but in the beginning of May he returned to London. Before leaving Cumberland, he wished to have a day fixed for the wedding: it was ultimately agreed, however, to wait till they could hear from Edward, and think of him as being cognizant of what was passing.

In July, Fred returned to Leatheburn, in time to receive a most affectionate greeting, as a brother, from Edward: but now there was another reason for putting off the marriage, and this was the very unsatisfactory account of the latter's health. Mail after mail was eagerly looked for, and at last, after much anxiety, as successive fortnights brought a worse and yet a worse report, they heard with inexpressible satisfaction that he was coming home. Fred himself could not but assent to the propriety of now waiting for the presence of the head of the family, and won the admiration of all by the cheerfulness with which he bore these repeated disappointments.

Autumn came and went; and even Wykham could hardly regret this prolongation of his days of courtship. Golden days they were, in those glorious autumn months, when the valley blazed with the crimson splendour of the decaying cherry trees, and the burnished brown of the oaks wonderfully commingled with the deep blue-green of the fern forests. Autumn passed away, and winter came; the rich colours faded from the trees, giving place to the beauty of the glistening birch twigs and the glowing evergreens. The snow came and covered the earth, as it had done five years before, when Edward Oakfield had left home for India, and was lying thick when the

post arrived on the 19th of December, bringing the Marseilles letter announcing his own immediate arrival.

The 23rd of December arrived, and with it the meeting so long and anxiously expected. What that meeting was we will not attempt to describe; how the weary wanderer, so long distressed both in body and mind, found himself at last in the haven where he would be. It was one of those days not to be forgotten in a lifetime; nor was the happiness disturbed so much as might have been expected, by the thought of Oakfield's illness, for the flush of animation was easily mistaken by sanguine observers for the sign of returning health. But in a few days the excitement on which he had been living for some days began to fade, and the re-action did not fail to impress its mark upon the sunken eye and the wasted cheek. His mother saw these symptoms with uneasiness; and as they continued and grew worse, with alarm. A touching incident first brought home to her the fact that Edward himself regarded his illness as being very serious.

On Christmas eve, while all were gathered round the cheerful fire, listening ("who but listened?") to the serenade which, according to old kindly northern custom, greets every family on this night, Edward began to repeat Wordsworth's beautiful

dedicatory lines to the Sonnets on the River Duddon, describing this identical custom. All listened with a subdued pleasure to the soft musical stanzas, so well suited to the sober cheerfulness of a winter's night; but when he came to the lines—

> "The mutual nod, the grave disguise
> Of hearts with gladness brimming o'er,
> And some unbidden tears that rise
> For names once heard, but heard no more,"

his voice faltered, and the emotion of his hearers was exchanged for one of a different nature.

Indeed, ere long it became obvious to all that poor Edward had been sent home, not before his constitution had been shattered, and that he had now little or no strength to resist the influence of an English winter, nor yet to flee from it. A cloud, not of gloom, but of seriousness, brooded over the whole family. The marriage of Wykham and Margaret seemed again indefinitely postponed by mutual consent. Edward himself never spoke of his illness as dangerous; perhaps indeed he himself knew less than others how ill he was, though occasional intimations of how seriously his case was regarded could not fail to reach him from time to time. One afternoon, early in January, one of those mild sunny interloping days which sometimes come to remind us of spring and summer in the

depth of winter, Oakfield was driving Margaret in a pony carriage — now his only means of getting about — along the road so often referred to in these pages, towards Dunmail Raise. At the foot of the pass the pony, unwilling to go beyond this his usual turning place, came to a halt.

"The pony thinks you will be tired if you go further," said Margaret; "he is right, is he not?"

"No, not to-day: I feel better than I have done for a long time; and I cannot afford to lose those sun-gleams just yet: so, Come up!" and with this exhortation he broke the force of the pony's associations with the whip, and on they went slowly up the hill.

"Margaret, what is the day of the month?"

"The 7th of January. Why do you ask?"

"How very strange!" said Oakfield, leaning back in the carriage and looking about him with a musing eye; "how very strange, Margaret! it is just six years to-day, then, since I had that long conversation with you about going to India, in this very place, going up this hill. I was thinking how exactly the same everything looks now as it did then: how you, dearest, are looking so unchanged; and so, for that matter, do I, perhaps: but I feel changed enough, Margaret. Do you recollect the day?"

"Perfectly."

They drove on without speaking for some time. Margaret's heart was full of the memory of that day, and all which it suggested. At length she said,

"It has been a happy change, Edward, which these six years have worked for you."

"Has it?" he replied mournfully. "God knows. When I said I felt different, I thought, I believe, of outward rather than inward changes. I seem to myself more experienced; older by a hundred years; and yet — and yet — Margaret! do you recollect asking me why I went to India?"

His sister nodded.

"Well, that question has recurred to me a thousand times: it recurs still, for 'all my mind is clouded with a doubt;' it is a sad thing to have battled for six years, Margaret, and seem at the end to be no nearer to a clear perception."

Margaret laid her hand upon her brother's arm; "Edward, dearest, you must not torment yourself needlessly; you know that none of us would presume to flatter you, but we know that during these six years you have been earnestly trying to do your duty; and I am sure that God acknowledges such as seekers of truth, and will, in his own time, send them such light as they need."

"You speak comfortably, my sister, and I hope

and believe, truly. Do not misunderstand me. I do not despair, nor at all feel that God has forsaken me: in my illness I find him continually near me; and should my illness end, as I sometimes think it will, I believe I could still find him very near. But, Margaret, he is a God of the living; and when I look forward and ask 'How am I to serve him in active life?' I again feel all at sea; for I feel no confidence that my work in India was such a service. The fact is, life seems to me to be getting more and more perplexed and wonderful every day, and I do not at all find in myself the strength that shall take hold of any one of its clues and follow it out to the end of the mystery. The combination of worldly activity and godliness seems becoming more and more impossible; the worldly to be living more entirely to and for the world; the godly to be more and more going out of it. I often think that the latter would be a wise and no unselfish course for me; that in these days, when so many are ready to push forward and supply all vacancies that may occur in the busy conspicuous posts, his is a true wisdom who keeps apart, and listens, and observes, and thinks, and, when he finds a season, speaks a rare word or two. That, in short, the literary man, not meaning thereby anything at all connected with the penny-a-liner, is about the best

off of all others. 'Serve God by action,' it is said, but then I find all courses of action so clogged and blocked up with meanness, and worldliness, and Mammon, that the service of God is well nigh choked out of them. Well, then patience is recommended. 'Wait,' it is said, 'and cast bread upon the waters; and sow, not desiring yourself to reap; and believe that these active courses shall be, by degrees, purified, and God will be continually drawing more and more good out of the evil which now offends you: do not expect to see perfection, but be content to take the good with the bad.' Well, this is a hard saying, though I suppose there is much truth in it; the only thing I complain of in it is, that this said contentment is so tempting; it is so easy to be content to take the good with the bad; and then it is so easy to go a step further, and be content with the bad. Why should I expose myself to this temptation? Why should I not seek for the good, where I can get it without the bad, in the ideal world? Why should not I strive to dwell there where there are so many thousands willing and more able to fill my place in the actual world? Why should I be battling and painfully discriminating between good and evil; finding, with much disgust, a grain of truth for a bushel of falsehood, if, by giving myself up to the pure words of great

men, I may be growing continually to a higher standard of unmixed truth?"

"Because," said Margaret, "God does not will that you should have peace in the world. How would the world go on, how would God's service be advanced in it, if all good men were to retire from it in disgust?"

"You are always to the point, Margaret, which is one of the very many reasons that I so like talking with you. God does not will, you say, that we should have peace in the world. I doubt that —only I think that we, with our slavish fears, shrink from peace as from every other good thing: none of us take as freely as God gives. We fidget and bustle, and plunge into painful turmoil, and then babble about peace not being our lot on earth, when in truth we have never looked for it. If all the good men, you say, were to leave the world, what would become of it? But what do you mean by leaving the world? Nothing but leaving the evil of the world, so that there should be a marked division between the good and evil—a consummation greatly to be desired, only in the present state of things, impossible. All the good men never *will* leave the world, so your hypothesis cannot be allowed: or if they did, so much the better, in which case it tells against your objection. Besides, Margaret, I cannot undertake to say

what other men might, or could, or should do; I must consider, in the first place, what I may and ought to do; the question for me is, 'May I give myself up to peace,' that is, practically, to thinking, and reading, and writing as the main employment of my life? or shall I again seek a more busy life, and going on patiently, sowing and not hoping to reap, taking a bushel of falsehood for a grain of truth, casting my bread upon the waters, resume my work in India? Oh!" he exclaimed suddenly, "I cannot do it."

Margaret looked at him tenderly; in his pale haggard face, from which, in his excitement, the false bloom had quite faded away, she seemed to read an anxious longing for the peace of which he spoke, which it would be vain and cruel to controvert. The tears stood in her eyes, as taking her brother's hand, and following more her own thoughts than what he had been saying, she exclaimed,

"Dear, dear Edward!"

He started.

"Margaret," he asked in a low tone, very different from that which he had formerly used, "what do you mean?"

"What should I mean?" she answered, smiling; "you are not surprised, I hope, at my calling you dear Edward: for if you are, you will have to be

shocked again: Dear, dear Edward, can you bear it?"

"You meant more than that, Margaret: come, tell me, darling: you must not treat me like a child: did you not think I looked very ill when you said that?"

She bowed her head and pressed his hand by way of answer.

"And you were thinking that I need not disquiet myself about returning to India, when I am likely, ere long, to be lying in the churchyard? Speak, Margaret; believe me, there is nothing shocking to me in this; it is not *that* which I shrink from; I have sometimes suspected that myself—often indeed; but do others think I shall die, Margaret?"

He looked anxiously in her face with the awful curiosity which all, the best or the more despairing, must ever feel, while they wait the answer to this fearful question. Margaret had neither the power nor the will to deceive him.

"We know little, dearest, but we sometimes are very sad about you; not *for* you, my own brother, for it would bring you peace."

It was long before Oakfield could reply.

"How wonderfully my mother bears it!" were his first words; "I fancied she had no idea how ill I was: it is strange," he added, "to be talking

of one's own death. Here we are at the top; on those stones, Margaret, I revolved the early acts of the drama of my life, and now at this place we are contemplating the last; and you my faithful confidante in all. A solemn studio this place has been to me, and now I think this is the last time that I shall ever see it; it must be your inheritance, my sister."

Poor Margaret could not answer, for the tears would no longer be repressed, and she rested her head upon her brother's shoulder and sobbed for grief, like a child. He tenderly kissed her, and turning, they drove slowly homewards. That evening the Christmas games were played as usual, but Edward could not but think from time to time of his conversation with Margaret, as he looked up and wondered painfully whether any change could weaken or destroy that communion which so held them all together. "If it could," he thought, "death would be horrible; but if death be horrible, God's promises have failed. Therefore, I believe in the Communion of Saints."

The days passed on uneventfully enough. The Indian Mail brought Oakfield a long letter from Mr. Middleton full of Indian intelligence, and expatiating on it with that energy, strong sense, and single-eyed honesty, which distinguished the writer. Strangely, indeed, did the vigour and the

decision of Mr. Middleton contrast with the doubts and perplexities in which Oakfield had confessed himself to Margaret to be still involved. By years of energetic labour, Mr. Middleton had clearly opened for himself that path of useful activity along which he was now pursuing his clear and prosperous course. It was as one who had overcome the difficulties of life, speaking to one who was even now dying in the struggle. Undoubtedly Oakfield was in the way himself to overcome likewise, and had there been more time before him, he might not have despaired of doing so; but as it was, he felt that it was too late. He read the letter with a mournful sense of regret, perhaps of self-reproach; then, with a smile full of sorrowful meaning, handed it to Margaret. It was evident that he had deliberately turned away from the world.

The days passed away, and with them the mild weather, and the iron frost again bound the earth. One sunny morning, Edward had gone with the rest of the party to the lake, which was completely frozen over. A sudden storm of sleet came on, with an icy driving wind; they all went home as fast as they could, but before they reached the house, Oakfield's tearing cough and difficult breathing indicated too surely that the mischief was done. He was put to bed, and there he

remained for some days. At the end of the month the weather again grew milder, and he was able once more to come into the drawing-room. But it was fearful to observe the ravages which the last attack had made in his face and frame. He was brought down stairs into the drawing-room on the afternoon of the 31st of January, and laid upon a sofa. Margaret read aloud to him; he spoke from time to time, but in a voice hardly above a whisper. Presently the door was thrown open, and Rose ran in, calling out, "Mamma, mamma! I've found a snow-drop."

It was the first of the year, and she held her prize in her hand. When she saw her brother however, she dropped it, and ran up to kiss him.

"Thank you, Rose," said Edward, in a voice so low as almost to frighten the little girl; "thank you for bringing the snowdrop; will you give it me?"

Rose brought it and gave it to him, crying, she did not know why.

"I did not think I should see any snowdrops this year, Rose, but you see you have brought me one. Herby, old fellow, I wish you would wheel the sofa to the window."

Herby did so, with Wykham's assistance—in silence, for all kept looking at Edward as if there was something unusual in his countenance. Mrs.

Oakfield had observed a change, as she thought, and had gone out of the room to send for the doctor. Edward, not perceiving her absence, said, when the sofa arrangement by the window was completed,

"Mother."

"She is gone out of the room," said Margaret; "she will be back directly."

"Call her, please."

At a sign Mary ran off to do so. Mrs. Oakfield came back in trembling haste, but grew composed as she approached her son: he lay with his face towards the window, pale and peaceful, with his eyes hardly open.

"Mother!" he exclaimed, faintly.

Nobody spoke. Mrs. Oakfield bent over his face, and bathed it with her tears.

"Mother! I am going to my Father, whom I have loved since you first taught me of him."

Presently turning to Rose, he said, "Rose, my pet, where is the snowdrop?"

It was in his unconscious hand; the little girl took it, and with a wail of grief and terror, held it before him.

"Gently, Rose, gently; where is Mary? Bless you both, darlings. Herby, my own brother; you brought me here to take my last look at God's

earth. Stay at home, Herby—they must not lose us both."

Another pause. What awe is equal to that of those silent pauses round a death-bed? Presently he resumed in a voice fainter than before, and with longer interruptions from his painful breathing, "Fred, give my love to Stanton, and to Middleton: Margaret!" he then said, in a tone so loud as to almost startle all who heard him, "my friend, my sister, Margaret! He is very near; He is here now, a Father to us all."

His mother, who had hitherto sat clasping his hands in speechless sorrow, again knelt by his side, and again embraced him in an agony of love.

"Mother!" he gently murmured, and his eyes closed, and the gasps came at long intervals; then succeeded but one word, the last word of that young warrior, a word which his countenance, as it settled into the sleep of death, confirmed; that word was "Peace:"—saying which he passed away.

CHAP. X.

"The ring is on;
The 'wilt thou' answered, and again
The 'wilt thou' asked, till out of twain
Her sweet 'I will' has made ye one."

TENNYSON.

ALTHOUGH Oakfield had been ill so long, yet his death came upon his family as a sudden calamity. Indeed the end had been sudden, and throughout they had regarded him more as a confirmed invali d than as one likely soon to die. His friends in India, more accustomed to such a result of a long illness, the seeds of which had been sown in that climate, were less startled, perhaps, but hardly less grieved. With the following letter from Stanton, containing an expression of their grief, we shall close the Indian part of our story.

"BENARES, MARCH 20TH, 1851.

"MY DEAR WYKHAM,

"I have just seen the Overland Mail of the 7th February with the intelligence of Oakfield's death. As you are now so closely connected with hi family, I will venture to ask you to assure them how

deeply he is mourned by his friends out here. I had been thinking very much of him in the last few days. Three days ago, in my passage up the river, I stopped at Hajeepoor for a few hours ; I went to the house in which he used to live, and visited the grave of the poor young boy, Vernon, whom he nursed and watched so faithfully. You can imagine how these places and associations recalled him to my mind. I thought of him as he was then, and as I had known him since, little thinking that he who so occupied my thoughts was even then in his grave. Not that it has surprised me to hear of his death. When I parted with him at Ferozepore, last year, I never expected to see him again. I shall not weary you with all the thoughts that crowd upon me as I recall the days of my acquaintance with him. Though a good deal younger than myself, and though I believe I exercised considerable influence over him, yet I can truly say that I always looked up to him ; not only for his good self-denying life, but also because I always felt impressed by the sadness which never, I think, quite deserted him. Had he lived longer, I believe he would have outgrown the doubts and suspicions of himself, which so clouded his mind : his anxious and too speculative nature would have derived strength and health from the invigorating influence of active employment, he would have held with fruitful strength the truth which he spent his life in dimly striving after. As it is, he has died in the struggle, and found by a shorter road a more perfect deliverance. He

was, I have long felt, the great tie that held me to this country, and now I begin to think seriously of emigrating with my wife and child. They are now just gone to England with Middleton; my wife had been ill for some time, so I took this opportunity of sending her home. I only wish that I could have gone too. I went down with them to Calcutta, and am now returning to Ferozepore, feeling more solitary than I have ever done since the days of my griffinage. You know I never liked India, but one always takes a sort of stoical pleasure in doing a very unpleasant duty. You may imagine what zest stable duty may acquire by being regarded as a chronic martyrdom!

"Middleton will be deeply disappointed at losing that meeting with Oakfield to which he had so long looked forward. I do not think he will return to India; he has money enough to stay at home, and will, probably, by publishing or otherwise, try to carry on his Indian labours there. If he does leave the service, it will be an additional inducement to me to quit India, so do not be surprised if you next hear of me and my wife as denizens of the bush. The fates of us three have diverged considerably since that night when you first met Oakfield at our mess at Meerut. The world, my dear Fred, would say that you had been the fortunate man of the trio. I do not exactly know about that; but I am sure that your marriage is a matter for the most sincere congratulation; I am not so certain about the thousand a-year. I trust it will not induce you to give up all work and hang about the world as an idle rascal for the rest of your

days. I believe you are just the man to like such a life; but you have no more *right* to be idle on a thousand than on a hundred, or on ten pounds a-year. I do hope you will enter some profession; you are not yet quite too old, though you very soon will be. Give my compliments to your wife if you are married when this reaches you. I love her for her name's sake, and also, my dear Fred, for yours. I am writing this on board the steamer, and shall send it up to the station post-office by a coolie. We shall be off again in less than an hour for Allahabad. So now I set my face towards Ferozepore, in which amiable place I suppose I shall be when this letter reaches you, just becoming used to hot weather and dust storms. Good bye, dear Fred; my heart is very full, a reason perhaps for being silent rather than for expatiating at greater length.

"Believe me, ever yours,

"H. Stanton."

And now once more, and for the last time, we return to Leatheburn. It is the middle of June, the anniversary of Edward Oakfield's birth, which has been fixed for the marriage of Wykham and Margaret. The beauty is that of a summer's day among the mountains. Upon the side of Helvellyn, "the solemn wastes of heathy hill" lie sleeping in the sunshine; the whole outline of the range that bounds the valley is reflected in the glassy waters of the lake, the sun glares down with a power

rarely felt in English latitudes, with a power that might be oppressive, were it not for the shade of the birch and sycamore trees which stud the valley, and the cooling ripple of the streams; tourists on foot, tourists on horseback, tourists in gigs, are panting along the high road, enjoying, to the utmost, that consummation of tourist bliss so seldom granted—a fine day; all living nature speaks aloud of happiness, but nowhere is there greater joy, placid and silent though it be, than in that grey house, almost hidden in the luxuriant creepers, where they are preparing to celebrate the birthday of the dead and the marriage of the living.

The celebration is to be gravely cheerful, as befits his memory to whom the day is sacred. Only two carriages are at the door, which are shortly filled, the first by Mrs. Oakfield, Margaret, and her two bridesmaids, Rose and Mary; the second, by Wykham, his father, Herby, and Mr. Middleton, who alone had been asked to come down from London and attend the wedding.

Herby had tried hard, but in vain, to induce Wykham to astonish the rustics of the valley, by appearing in all the magnificence of Bengal Light Cavalry full dress uniform, and himself made up for any deficiencies with the gorgeous costume of an Oxford Freshman. They drove along the well-remembered grass-grown road, by the lake side,

sheltered by the deep woods from the rays of the mid-day sun, and entered the little church, which, cool, ancient, and kindly-looking, with its little stone arches and pillars, was now full of people, not listless gossipers, nor gaping starers, but kind, sympathising, friendly neighbours, who had known the family before either Wykham or Margaret were born, and who, only five months before, had followed Edward Oakfield's body to the grave. The young clergyman who officiated was orthodox, and read the whole service right through in a strictly orthodox manner; but orthodoxy itself could not make dull that solemn ceremony, when those two, in the presence of God and their friends and neighbours, plighted to each other their faith in the name of God, and promised to be one in flesh and in spirit till death did them part. At last the service is over down to the very last word "amazement," and they pass out into the churchyard. When they reached the little white gate leading into the road, Wykham stood still, and pressing his wife's arm pointed to two graves that were close beside them, under the boughs of the old yew tree, which flung its shade over one-half of that little burying-ground. They were the grass-grown graves of the two Edward Oakfields, father and son, with the name, age, and date of death inscribed on a stone at the head of each. Mar-

garet perceived and accepted her husband's meaning, and as they had already made their vows publicly in the presence of God and the living, so now they silently renewed them in the no less real and awful presence of God and the dead. Breakfast was waiting for them at the house, to which they sat down, a family party, with the single addition of Mr. Middleton.

It was a day of shower and sunshine, of tears and laughter, of most intense feeling both of regret and hope, the two springs that move human hearts. When Fred went up to Rose with a grave face, and said he was going to kiss her, and Rose with equal gravity refused to be kissed, then the laughter carried it; but when Fred and Margaret had fairly started on their road to Scotland, then for a few minutes the tears had it all their own way; and poor Rose and Mary cried as if their hearts would break, nor could their mother find it in her heart to stop them: "And yet, Herby, my boy," she said, as she took her son to her arms, "I believe it is in every way a most happy day for her and for us."

Reader, we believe so too; and with this pleasing confidence we must conclude. Wykham has followed Mr. Middleton's advice, and matriculated as a gentleman commoner at a small college at Ox-

ford, and is now residing as a married man at that University, looking forward to going to the bar. We hear that at a recent debate on Indian affairs at the "Union," he astonished "the house" with a few personal recollections of Mooltan. Herby is also residing at Christ Church, and as he never has anything to say to the highest authorities of that place, nor they to him, is probably doing well there. The Vernons still pay periodical visits to Leatheburn. Walter Vernon was of the party on the last occasion, a fine young midshipman. If he and Rose are as fond of each other a few years hence as they seem to be now, there is likely to be another wedding in the Oakfield family. Mr. Middleton has not returned to India, nor is it likely that he will; but his sister has rejoined her husband, and is perhaps by this time on her way with him to the Canterbury Settlement. So "Young India," or the "Ferozepore School" is quite broken up, without, it must be confessed, leaving the slightest trace of existence behind. Yet some say that no brave man fights and dies in vain; that the fact that there was one who, in the days of his youth, desired and earnestly endeavoured to be a devout, thoughtful, sensible soldier cannot become as though it had never been; in short, that there was or will be a fruit, not only for himself

but for others, from that anxious life-conflict which was borne by him, who the while is peacefully sleeping under the old yew tree in Leatheburn churchyard.

THE END.

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CLASSIFIED INDEX.

Agriculture and Rural Affairs.

Pages

Bayldon on Valuing Rents, etc. - - 6
Caird's Letters on Agriculture - - 7
Cecil's Stud Farm - - - - 7
Loudon's Encyclopædia of Agriculture - 14
,, Self-Instruction for Farmers, etc. 14
,, (Mrs.) Lady's Country Companion 14
Low's Elements of Agriculture - - 15
,, Domesticated Animals - - - 14

Arts, Manufactures, and Architecture.

Bourne's Catechism of the Steam Engine 6
,, On the Screw Propeller - - 6
Brande's Dictionary of Science, etc. - 6
Chevreul on Colour - - - - - 8
Cresy's Encyclo. of Civil Engineering - 8
Eastlake on Oil Painting - - - - 8
Gwilt's Encyclopædia of Architecture - 9
Jameson's Sacred and Legendary Art - 11
,, Commonplace Book - - 12
Loudon's Rural Architecture - - - 14
Moseley's Engineering and Architecture 14
Richardson's Art of Horsemanship - - 19
Steam Engine, by the Artisan Club - - 6
Tate on Strength of Materials - - 22
Ure's Dictionary of Arts, etc. - - 24

Biography.

Bodenstedt and Wagner's Schamyl - 23
Brightwell's Memorials of Opie - - 18
Bunsen's Hippolytus - - - - 7
Chesterton's Autobiography - - - 8
Clinton's (Fynes) Autobiography - - 8
Cockayne's Marshal Turenne - - - 23
Freeman's Life of Kirby - - - - 12
Haydon's Autobiography, by Taylor - 10
Holcroft's Memoirs - - - - 23
Holland's (Lord) Memoirs - - - 10
Lardner's Cabinet Cyclopædia - - 13
Maunder's Biographical Treasury - - 16
Memoir of the Duke of Wellington - 23
Memoirs of James Montgomery - - 16
Merivale's Memoirs of Cicero - - 16
Russell's Memoirs of Moore - - - 17

Pages

Russell's Life of Lord William Russell - 19
Southey's Life of Wesley - - - 21
,, Life and Correspondence - 21
Stephen's Ecclesiastical Biography - 21
Taylor's Loyola - - - - - 23
,, Wesley - - - - - 22
Townsend's Eminent Judges - - - 22
Waterton's Autobiography and Essays - 24

Books of General Utility.

Acton's Modern Cookery Book - - 5
Black's Treatise on Brewing - - - 6
Cabinet Gazetteer - - - - - 7
,, Lawyer - - - - - 7
Cust's Invalid's Own Book - - - 8
Hints on Etiquette - - - - - 10
Hudson's Executor's Guide - - - 11
,, On Making Wills - - - 11
Lardner's Cabinet Cyclopædia - - - 13
Loudon's Self Instruction - - - 14
,, Lady's Companion - - - 14
,, (Mrs.) Amateur Gardener - 14
Maunder's Treasury of Knowledge - 16
,, Biographical Treasury - - 16
,, Scientific Treasury - - 16
,, Treasury of History - - 16
,, Natural History - - - 16
Pocket and the Stud - - - - 10
Pycroft's English Reading - - - 19
Reece's Medical Guide - - - - 19
Rich's Companion to Latin Dictionary - 19
Riddle's Latin Dictionaries - - - 19
Richardson's Art of Horsemanship - 19
Roget's English Thesaurus - - - 19
Rowton's Debater - - - - - 19
Short Whist - - - - - - 20
Thomson's Interest Tables - - - 22
Traveller's Library - - - - 23
Webster's Domestic Economy - - 24
Willich's Popular Tables - - - 24
Wilmot's Abridgment of Blackstone's Commentaries - - - - - 24

Botany and Gardening.

Conversations on Botany - - - 8
Hooker's British Flora - - - - 10
,, Guide to Kew Gardens - - 10

London: Printed by M. Mason, Ivy Lane, Paternoster Row.

	Pages
Lindley's Introduction to Botany	14
,, Theory of Horticulture	12
Loudon's Hortus Britannicus	14
,, (Mrs.) Amateur Gardener	14
,, Self-Instruction for Gardeners	14
,, Encyclopædia of Trees & Shrubs	14
,, ,, Gardening	14
,, ,, Plants	14
Rivers's Rose Amateur's Guide	19

Chronology.

Blair's Chronological Tables	6
Bunsen's Ancient Egypt	7
Haydn's Beatson's Index	10
Nicolas's Chronology of History	13

Commerce and Mercantile Affairs.

Atkinson's Shipping Laws	5
Francis On Life Assurance	9
Loch's Sailor's Guide	14
Lorimer's Letters to a Young Master Mariner	14
M'Culloch's Commerce and Navigation	15
Thomson's Interest Tables	22

Criticism, History, and Memoirs.

Austin's Germany	5
Balfour's Sketches of Literature	5
Blair's Chron. and Historical Tables	6
Bunsen's Ancient Egypt	7
,, Hippolytus	7
Burton's History of Scotland	7
Chalybæus's Speculative Philosophy	8
Conybeare and Howson's St. Paul	8
Eastlake's History of Oil Painting	8
Erskine's History of India	9
Francis's Annals of Life Assurance	9
Gleig's Leipsic Campaign	23
Gurney's Historical Sketches	9
Hamilton's Discussions in Philosophy, etc.	9
Haydon's Autobiography, by Taylor	10
Holland's (Lord) Foreign Reminiscences	10
,, ,, Whig Party	10
Jeffrey's (Lord) Contributions	12
Kemble's Anglo-Saxons in England	12
Lardner's Cabinet Cyclopædia	13
Macaulay's Crit. and Hist. Essays	15
,, History of England	15
,, Speeches	15
Mackintosh's Miscellaneous Works	15
,, History of England	15
M'Culloch's Geographical Dictionary	15
Martineau's Church History	16
Maunder's Treasury of History	16
Memoir of the Duke of Wellington	23
Merivale's History of Rome	16
,, Roman Republic	16
Milner's Church History	16
Moore's (Thomas)' Memoirs, etc.	17
Mure's Greek Literature	17
Ranke's Ferdinand and Maximilian	23
Rich's Companion to Latin Dictionary	19
Riddle's Latin Dictionaries	19
Rogers's Essays from Edinburgh Review	19
Roget's English Thesaurus	19
Russell's (Lady Rachel) Letters	19
,, Life of Lord William Russell	19
St. John's Indian Archipelago	19
Schmitz's History of Greece	20
Smith's Sacred Annals	21
Southey's The Doctor etc.	21
Stephen's Ecclesiastical Biography	21
,, Lectures on French History	21
Sydney Smith's Works	21
,, Select Works	23
,, Lectures on Moral Philosophy	21
Taylor's Loyola	22
,, Wesley	22
Thirlwall's History of Greece	22
Townsend's State Trials	22
Turkey and Christendom	23
Turner's Anglo-Saxons	24
,, Middle Ages	24
,, Sacred History of the World	22
Zumpt's Latin Grammar	24

Geography and Atlases.

Butler's Geography and Atlases	7
Cabinet Gazetteer	7
Durrieu's Morocco	23
Hall's Large Library Atlas	9
Hughes's Australian Colonies	23
Jesse's Russia and the War	12
Johnston's General Gazetteer	12
M'Culloch's Geographical Dictionary	15
,, Russia and Turkey	23
Milner's Baltic Sea	16
Murray's Encyclopædia of Geography	18
Sharp's British Gazetteer	20
Wheeler's Geography of Herodotus	24

Juvenile Books.

Amy Herbert	20
Corner's Children's Sunday Book	8
Earl's Daughter (The)	20
Experience of Life	20
Gertrude	20
Howitt's Boy's Country Book	11
,, (Mary) Children's Year	11
Katharine Ashton	20
Lady Una and her Queendom	12
Laneton Parsonage	20
Mrs. Marcet's Conversations	15 & 16
Margaret Percival	20
Pycroft's English Reading	19

Medicine and Surgery.

Bull's Hints to Mothers	6
,, Management of Children	6
Copland's Dictionary of Medicine	8
Cust's Invalid's Own Book	8
Holland's Mental Physiology	10
Latham On Diseases of the Heart	12
Little on Treatment of Deformities	14
Moore On Health, Disease, and Remedy	17
Pereira On Food and Diet	18
Psychological Inquiries	18
Reece's Medical Guide	19

Miscellaneous and General Literature.

Atkinson's Sheriff Law	5
Austin's Sketches of German Life	5
Carlisle's Lectures and Addresses	23
Chalybæus's Speculative Philosophy	8
Defence of *Eclipse of Faith*	9
Eclipse of Faith	8
Greg's Essays on Political and Social Science	9

	Pages
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